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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

SAlN'r ALPHONSUS DE L1GUORI

Doctor of the Church,

Bithop 0y Saint ^gathay and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

EDITED BY

G- ZR Σ 'IXZE TÆ 3

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS.

Volume IX.

Victories of the Martyrs;

OR.

THE LIVES OF THE MOST CELEBRATED MARTYRS OF THE CHURCH.

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ORATORIO DE LA SAGRADA
u FAMILIA
L 1GLESIA DE SAN JOSÉ

Centenary Edition

THE COMPLETE ASCETICAL WORKS of ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

Volume

]..... The Eternal Truths: Preparation for Death

2 ..... The Way of Salvation and Perfection

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BY

St. ALPHONSUS de LIGUORI

Doctor of the Church.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM.

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

REDEMPTORIST FATHERS

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Archbishop of New York

APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Leonard Buys, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled the "Victories of the Martyrs," which is Vol. IX. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori.

.iohn Sephton, C.SS.R.,
Provincial.

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NOTICE

St. Alphonsus was in his eightieth year when he wrote the Victories of the Martyrs, which appeared in the year 1776. He had just been relieved by Pope Pius VI. of the, burden of the episcopate, which weighed so heavily upon him, but not of the burden of his Congregation, which furnished him with a retreat that was most laborious. Moreover, he had to compose this work in the midst of the greatest sufferings, says Father Tannoia.[1] The kingdom of Naples, he adds, received this new fruit of the zeal of our saint with general satisfaction; and in the opinion of Canon Fabius Massa, the Church was to derive the greatest profit from it, nothing being better suited, especially in those calamitous times, to strengthen the faith and to enkindle piety.

But the reading of such a book is not less useful in our age, and will be so in every age. The constancy of the faithful will always be tried, piety will always be persecuted, by the enemies of Jesus Christ: *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution?*[2] Other sufferings will also not be wanting; for the road leading to heaven is sown with all kinds of tribulations: *Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God?*[3] Such was the way in which our divine Saviour walked: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into*

1 Book iv. Chap. 3 (7).

2 "Omnes qui pic volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur."—2 *Tùn.* iii. 12.

3 "Per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum Dei."—*Attst* xiv. 21.

his glory ?' And he himself informs us that his disciples and his servants should be treated as he was treated: *The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his Lord?* But he assures us that the trial will never be above our strength, and that he is ready to aid those that call upon him: *And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will also make with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it?* Hence he wishes us to have unshaken confidence while we are in the midst of the most cruel anguish, since beforehand he has made sure our victory: *In the world you shall have distress : but have confidence, I have overcome the world?* He even wishes that at such a time we should be filled with joy while considering the eternal reward that he has prepared for the pains of a moment: *Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven?* And when we think of the love that our Saviour has shown us in all that he has done and suffered for us, our hearts are inflamed with gratitude and love towards him; we, then, desire to labor and to suffer yet more for his glory; we desire to sacrifice for him our lives, finding no other happiness than that of suffering and dying for God.

Such are the sentiments that we admire in the athletes of the faith—sentiments with which we feel ourselves sweetly penetrated while reading the *Victories of the Martyrs.* This volume is a selection of the most beautiful

1 * Nonne hæc oportuit pati Christum, et ita intrare in gloriam suam *7'—Luke,* xxiv. 26.

3 " Non est discipulus super magistrum, nec servus super dominum suum."—*Matt.* x. 24.

3 " Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis; sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere."—i *Cor.* x. 13.

4 " In mundo pressuram habebitis; sed confidite, ego vici mundum." —*fohn,* xvi. 33.

4 " Gaudete et exsultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in coelis." —*Matt,* v. 12.

examples drawn from the history of the martyrs of every age and place, after the time of the apostles, and taken from the best sources. We have carefully revised these sources in order to be able to establish the correctness of the narrative according to the intention expressed by the author in his preface. We have at times found it necessary, as was the case in the preceding works, to make certain corrections; we have even here and there added the name of a place or of a person, a date or some trifling circumstance, which the clearness and the interest of the narration seemed to us to demand. When, however, we did not follow the author literally, we only did so in order to render his thought more clear; and when the matter appeared to us to be of some importance, we added a note, so as to give to this good book all the accuracy that the readers might desire. In a word, we have done what we think the author would himself have done, and have written for our time and for those for whom our work is intended, without, however, confounding what is the translator's with what belongs to the author, whose every word has always been sacred to us.

This volume completes the first series of the *Ascetictù Works,* comprising the volumes that are suitable for persons of every age and every state of life. We began the series by the Preparation of Death, and we finish it by the Victories of the Martyrs, who are our principal models after Jesus and Mary, the King and the Queen of martyrs. The other saints had only to follow them; it is thus that they have acquired the same glory. "St. John beheld all the saints clothed in white, and with palms in their hands: *Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*' The palm is the symbol of martyrs; and yet all the saints did not suffer martyrdom;—why, then.

1 " Amicti stolis albis, et palmæ in manibus eorum."—*Apoc.* vii. 9.

do all the saints bear palms in their hands? St. Gregory replies, that all the saints have been martyrs either of the sword or of patience; so that he adds, 'We can be martyrs without the sword, if we keep patience.'"[1] We can even obtain many times the merit of the martyrs and increase the value of our crown by acts of a good-will, as is explained in the Introduction.[2]

But our revered author was not satisfied with telling us how we may imitate the heroes of faith; he shows us this much better in his wonderful life, which was a prodigy of patience and long martyrdom. There are but few saints who suffered as much as he suffered.

He was his own tyrant and his own executioner. Although he had never committed a grievous sin from bis youth, yet, impelled by his ardent love for Jesus Christ, he gave himself up to the most cruel penances, and God permitted that he could continue them to the age of nearly ninety-one years. He regarded himself as a victim that was to be entirely immolated to divine love without the least reserve; and convinced that this love is manifested by labor and suffering, as he himself teaches us,[3] he thought only of laboring and suffering as much as possible for God. But obedience being better than sacrifice, he bound himself by a vow to follow in all things the advice of the director of his conscience, in which he recognized the divine will. By renouncing all worldly hopes, he condemned himself to a life of extreme poverty; his garments, his furniture, and everything that he used, even when he was a bishop, bore the impress of this virtue, and reduced him to what was strictly necessary. At night he took his short repose on a simple straw mattress, and sometimes on a plank; and when travelling, if he could not go on foot, he would use

[1] *Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ,* vol. vi. page 308 or 309.
[2] See pp. 37, 39.
[3] *Sure Signs of Divine Love* vol. ii. page 492.

only a donkey for riding. He took but little nourishment, and was careful to mix it with bitter herbs so as to render its taste very disagreeable; and this he often ate on his knees or sitting on the floor. Besides the ordinary fast and abstinence, he fasted on bread and water on all Saturdays and vigils of the principal feast.-> When he studied or wrote, he would stand with small stones in his shoes in order to suffer. He severely scourged himself everyday, and frequently to blood; he used, besides, little chains, hair-cloth, and other instruments for the purpose of continually tormenting his flesh. One evening, worn out with fatigue, he fell down in his room, having swooned away, and remained unconscious the whole night and the greater part of the following day; the doctor ordered him to be disrobed, and on him was found a hair-shirt that covered his whole body. From this we may form an idea of his austerities, which he strove so much to conceal from the eyes of men. To these self-inflicted penalties must be added his great labors in the midst of pain, solicitude, and continual trials.

Our saint had at one time conceived the idea to devote himself to the Chinese missions, and he was anxious to know God's holy will in regard to this matter; but the Lord deigned to call him to another apostolate. Obedient to the voice of Heaven, he generously undertook the work of his Institute, notwithstanding numerous obstacles. When, after having laid the foundation, he saw himself all at once abandoned by his first companions, far from yielding to the efforts of hell to discourage him, he bound himself by a formal vow, under pain of grave sin, to persevere in his vocation, should he have to remain alone, and to offer himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of souls. Wishing to consecrate himself unreservedly, during his whole life, to the service of God, he made another vow, which the Bull of his canonization

declares to be very difficult, and till that time unheard namely, never to allow a moment to pass without employing it in some useful work. Heaven blessed these magnanimous acts. The devil, however, although always conquered by him, never ceased to excite against him a thousand contradictions, unjust prejudices, perfidious accusations, endless intrigues, law-suits, threats, and odious attacks. His enemies went so far as to bribe an infamous creature to sully his reputation and that of the missionaries. A man of influence, who was leading a scandalous life, took with him one day a troop of assassins for the purpose of murdering him; but he was arrested on the way. The saint, on learning the danger that threatened him, quietly said: " He may take my life if he pleases; in this way I shall obtain the crown of martyrdom."

It was a remarkable thing that his own friends were the cause of affliction to him no less than his enemies. As soon as they heard of the design that he had formed of founding a new Congregation of missionaries, nearly all of them turned against him. Those who but recently admitted his talents and his virtues allowed a change to come over them in their conduct towards him, looking upon him as an extravagant and fanatical man, a visionary filled with self-conceit, the sport of a foolish illusion; without consideration they heaped upon him, both in public and private, the most humiliating reproaches; everywhere there were persons that vied with one another to decry him; and men in authority that were secretly his guidesand his support did not dare to permit him to use their testimonials that he might defend himself. His associates of the Propaganda wished even to exclude him from their society and to deprive him of a benefice that was bis only support. Those that had declared themselves against him triumphed, especially when it became known that his first attempt had failed, and

that he now found himself abandoned by his companions; he was regarded as one that was irretrievably lost; no one dared to take up his defence; and he was even referred to from the pulpit as a melancholy instance. The confusion and the anguish of our saint reached their highest point. Yet the most cruel trial to which his heart had to submit came from the excessive tenderness of his father when it became necessary for him to tear himself away from his gentle embraces in order to proceed to the place whither God was calling him.

The Lord, moreover, reserved for his virtue many other assaults, and these came from his own children, and from the common Father of the faithful, by whom he was loved and venerated, and to whom he was always perfectly devoted. Alphonsus had known how to avoid the episcopate, of which the thought alone made him tremble. He had already thought himself free from all danger, when, at the age of sixty-six and under the burden of grave infirmities, he found it suddenly imposed upon him by the irrevocable command of Clement XIII. This was for the poor old man like a thunderbolt, which he appeared only to survive by a miracle. After having carried this heavy burden for thirteen years, with a courage that was truly heroic, he was finally relieved of the episcopate owing to the infirmities that were overwhelming him. It was then believed that he would finish his days in peace among his own children, but he was really going to empty the cup of bitterness that was yet far from being empty. The enemies of his Congregation never ceased to compass his ruin by all imaginable proceedings. His Congregation was con tinually hovering between life and death; but they were unsuccessful in their criminal designs. When this violent storm appeared to have subsided and peace was restored, the devil succeeded in stirring up, in the Institute itself, a domestic war that shook it in its very foundation.

This was caused by some subjects that abused the confidence of the holy Founder, and turned against him. He was shamefully calumniated at Rome in the midst of such a concourse of circumstances that it was impossible for him to defend himself. He was accused of having infringed his Rule, and consequently the authority of the Holy See that had approved it. He was judged and was treated as the author of a culpable act of which he was only the principal victim. Pius VI., prepossessed by false reports and deceived by every appearance of truth, believed it to be his duty to condemn him, to depose him from his office of Superior-General, and even to exclude him from his dear Congregation. Our saint aged eighty-four years, suffering and powerless, received this news without being able to answer; his heart was, moreover, filled with great sorrow in being obliged to see his most worthy children involved in his own disgrace, and the great injury to souls that would be the result. There was no one left to console him; humble and resigned, he profoundly bent his head, and said: "It is only God whom I desire; it is sufficient if his grace is not wanting to me. The Pope wishes it so; may God be praised ! The will of the Pope is the will of God." He was for several years suffering under this fatal blow, the hardest that could have been inflicted upon him; and it was only after his death that the Holy Father learned the entire truth, and became fully convinced of his innocence.

God permitted this event in order to give his servant an occasion to exercise till the end his great virtue, and to acquire very great merits. But this was not all: he still had to suffer a long and painful martyrdom, both in his body and in his soul.

At the beginning of his apostolic career he was affected by two mortal illnesses in consequence of his excessive labors; his recovery was obtained only through the particular help of the Blessed Virgin. In his fifty-

second year he was taken with a violent asthma that endangered his life; he was relieved of this trouble, but continued to suffer from it ever after. The violence that he had to do to himself in order to accept the episcopal charge again reduced him to extremity; he rallied with great difficulty, and had a relapse during the first visitation of his diocese, about two years after. Each time his case was despaired of, the last sacraments had to be administered to him, and preparations were made for his funeral; but his course was not yet finished. It was in the seventy-second year of his age, in 1768, that he was attacked by his most cruel malady. An extremely painful rheumatism, which at first was thought to be sciatica, gradually encroached upon all his joints and ended by affecting the vertebræ of his neck. His head was very much bent over, so that his chin rested on his breast, where the pressure of the beard produced a painful wound. As the sick man suffered without complaint, this wound was only perceived when the vitiated eruption flowing from it attracted the attention of the doctors. All his members were contracted, and the body, when viewed from behind, appeared to be without a head. The holy bishop had to remain painfully seated in an arm-chair, during the night as well as during the day, and could not lie down, nor dress, nor move, nor rest. However, at the end of a few months he became convalescent; but he continued to suffer, and it was no longer possible for him to raise his head during the nineteen years that he still lived. Nothing was more wonderful than his patience and his resignation during this painful sickness; and yet great was the constancy of his zeal to perform the exercises of piety, to mortify himself, to apply himself to the duties of his charge, not withstanding all his sufferings.

And to all this we must add his interior trials with which the others cannot be compared. Alphonsus was

a little more than thirty-three years old when God subjected him to this terrible cross. His life was then only a life of aridity and desolation. At the altar he found himself without devotion; prayer had become to him most irksome. "I go to Jesus Christ," he used to say, "and he repels me; I have recourse to Mary, and she is deaf to my voice." A most sensible privation for a soul that has tasted heavenly delights, and that now, plunged into darkness, sees only misery, and fears to have made itself unworthy of the presence of its Beloved! But it was. above all, during the last period of his life that our saint had to undergo the most frightful combats. It seems that God had given to the devil the power to afflict him as he afflicted Job. After having struck him in his body and in his religious family, having made him fall into disgrace with the Sovereign Pontiff, the tempter represented to him these evils as the punishment of his sins, and wished to persuade him that God had abandoned him. The poor old man was then heard to cry out in a heart-rending voice: "Help me; the devil wishes to make me despair. Help me; I do not wish to offend God." The enemy being repulsed, returned again and again to the charge, seeking to take him by surprise. He attacked him in different ways—by darkness, scruples, fears, perplexities, horrible temptations. He even appeared to him under the form of different persons, and now flattered him to inspire him with the sentiment of vanity, now endeavored to make him believe that he was a reprobate. But in his distress the saint never omitted to invoke Jesus and Mary, and assistance was given to him.

We give but a cursory view of what Alphonsus suffered during his long career. Would it not have been much n ie c eeable to hini to shed his blood by the hand of the executioner, in the midst of the most cruel tortures, with the consolation of sacrificing his life for Jesus Christ as he desired to do? and would not his merits have been

proportionate to his trials and to his fidelity? We should, therefore, be convinced that he bears a brilliant palm in the assembly of the celestial conquerors.

O great saint, who hast done so much to draw us to God, to show us the way to salvation, and to conduct us to it by thy example! now that thou dost occupy so high a rank in glory, assist us from the heights of heaven; obtain for us the grace to follow thee at least from afar; or rather, obtain for us the grace generously to walk in thy footsteps. Obtain forus great humility, great confidence in the divine mercy, great faith, great patience in trials, great love, great courage, great devotedness until the last breath. Obtain for us by thy prayers that we may reach a place near to thee, so that thou mayest present us as thy conquest for Jesus Christ. Amen.

Ed.

Introduction.

USEFUL REFLECTIONS

BY WHICH WE MA Y DERIVE GREA T FRUIT FROM THE READING OF THE COMBA TS AND THE VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS.

I.

Virtues Practised by the Holy Martyrs in the Combats that they had to Sustain against their Persecutors.

If the reading of the Lives of the Saints is a great means to preserve piety, as is said by St. Philip Neri,[1] and as is taught by all the masters of spiritual life, we shall find it yet more useful to read about the victories that the holy martyrs gained by sacrificing their lives amid torments. Hence, before relating their individual triumphs, we shall consider, to our spiritual advantage, the principal virtues of which they gave proofs in their combats.

There is no doubt that the martyrs are indebted for their crown to the power of the grace which they received from Jesus Christ; for he it is that gave them the strength to despise all the promises and all the threats of tyrants, and to endure all the torments till they had made an entire sacrifice of their lives. So that all their merits, as St. Augustine writes,[2] were the effects of the grace that God in his mercy imparted to them. But it is also certain, and even of faith, that on their part the martyrs co-operated with the grace which enabled them to obtain their victory. Innovators have blasphemed against this truth, saying that all the crimes

[1] *Bcifciy* 1. 2, ch. 5.

[2] *Conf.* Book 9, c. 13.—S. 131, *E. R.*

of the wicked and all the good works of the just are the offspring of necessity; but the same St. Augustine gives them the lie when he says that in this case no reward or punishment would be just.[1]

The martyrs, therefore, acquired great merits, because the virtues of which they gave proofs in their combats were great and heroic. We shall briefly describe these virtues in order that we may imitate them in the tribulations to which we may be exposed in this life.

We at first remark that the martyrs were firmly attached to all the dogmas of the Christian faith. In the first ages of the Church two false religions specially opposed ours: these were the religion of the Gentiles and that of the Jews. The religion of the Gentiles, by admitting several gods, furnished itself the proof of its falsity; for if the world had been under the dominion of several masters, it could not have maintained that regular and constant order which we see has been preserved for so many centuries up to the present time. This is evident even to the eyes of natural reason; for *every kingdom divided against itself shall be destroyed?*[2] Moreover, the very words of the idolatrous priests clearly demonstrated the falsity of their worship, since the actions that they attributed to their gods represented the latter as filled with passions and vices. This was the way in which the holy martyrs reproached the tyrants when the latter exhorted them to sacrifice to their idols: "How can we," they said, "adore your gods, if, instead of offering us models of virtue, they exhibit us only examples of vice ?" The religion of the Jews, although formerly holy and revealed by God, was at that time not less manifestly obsolete and false. In fact, in the Scriptures themselves which they had received from God, had preserved with so

[1] "Sive autem iniquitas, sive justitia, si in potestate non esset, nullum pnemium, nulla poena justa esset."—*Contra Faust.* l. 22, c. 78.

[2] "Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur."—*Luke,* xi. 17.

much care, and had transmitted to us, it was predicted that at a certain time the Son of God was to come down upon earth, to become man, and to die for he salvation of the world; that they themselves would put him to death on the Cross as they actually did, and that in punishment of this impiety they would be driven from their own kingdom, and without a king, without a temple, without a country, they would live scattered, and be vagabonds throughout the world, abhorred and despised by all nations. These were predictions that were manifestly realized in every particular after the death of the Saviour.

What rendered still more certain the truth of our faith was the formation of a new people of God by the conversion of the Gentiles: this was known to have been announced beforehand in the Scriptures, and this was seen to be realized as soon as the apostles spread through out the world in order to promulgate the New Law preached by Jesus Christ. This event was an evident proof of the protection that God gave to the Christian rex ligion ; for how could these poor sinners or these publicans, such as the apostles were—men devoid of instruction, of wealth, of every human assistance, and even persecuted by the magistrates and the emperors, have induced, without divine assistance, so many Christians to renounce all their property, all their honors, and generously to sacrifice their lives amid tortures the most excruciating that the power and the cruelty of the tyrants could invent ?

But what was still more marvellous was to behold so many Gentiles embrace a religion difficult to believe and difficult to practise. It was difficult to believe on the part of the intellect, for this religion teaches mysteries beyond the reach of human reason; namely, the Trinity of one God in three distinct persons, who have but one nature, one power, and one will; the Incarnation of the Son of God come upon earth to die for the salvation of mankind; and many other articles regarding original

sin, the spirituality and the immortality of the soul, the sacraments, especially the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It was difficult to practise on the part of the will, because it commands things contrary to the inclinations of nature corrupted by sin and repugnant to the libertinism in which the pagans were living, who were accustomed to follow their passionsand to give themselves up to the pleasures of the senses. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the Christian religion saw itself embraced by so many nations! From this universal consent of the nations St. Augustine argues the divinity of our religion, saying that had not God illuminated by his powerful grace so many people—civilized and barbarian, learned and illiterate, noble and plebeian, all immersed in the superstitions of their country, imbued from their earliest years with maxims so opposed to the sanctity of faith—how could they have embraced it?

Besides the interior lights of grace, there were many other causes that induced the people to embrace Christianity and to remain firm in professing it. Miracles contributed much to inflame their zeal; for from the moment in which the apostles began to preach, the Lord caused miracles to abound in testimony of the faith, as St. Mark says: *They preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed}* It is certain that the great miracles that had been wrought by the apostles and their disciples contributed largely to the conversion of the world. In vain the adherents of idolatry tried to make believe that these prodigies were the effect of magical incantations: every one well understood that God would never permit them if they were to serve the purpose of giving support to diabolical agency or to a false religion. The proof of miracles was therefore a truly divine proof, by which the

[1] "Prædicaverunt ubique, Domino coopérante et sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis."—*Mark,* xvi. 20.

Lord confirmed the Christian religion and the faith of believers.

The faith became further strengthened by the constancy of martyrs of both sexes, of every age and condition : men and women, the aged and the young, the noble and the plebeian, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, married and single. They were seen to renounce their homes, their parents, their titles, their fortunes, and everything they possessed, to embrace scourges, racks, fire, torture, and to encounter death under its most horrible shapes; and all this not only with courage, but with joyfulness and thanksgiving to God, who made them worthy to suffer and die for his love. St. Justin, who was himself a martyr, confessed that this heroic virtue of the Christians had been to him a powerful stimulus to embrace the faith![1]

The martyrs received great courage in their sufferings from the desire of quickly arriving at the fruition of the promises made by Jesus Christ to his followers: *Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you. . . . Be glad and rejoice^ for your reward is very great in heaven? Every one therefore that shall confess me before men I vuill also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.*[2][3]

But what above all filled the martyrs with courage and ardor and made them wish to die was their great love for their divine Master, whom St. Augustine[4] calls the King of Martyrs, who wished to die on the Cross in pain and in desolation for the love of us, as St. Paul says:

1 *Apolog.* i.

2 " Beati estis, cum maledixerint vobis, et persecuti vos fuerint . . . Gaudete et exsultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in coelis."—*Matt.* v. ii.

3 " Omnis ergo qui confitebitur me coram hominibus, confitebor et ego eum coram Patre meo, qui in cœlis est."—*Matt.* x. 32.

4 *In Ps.* Ixiii.

He loveth us, and hath delivered himself for us.' Actuated by this love, they went with joy to suffer and to die for Jesus Christ; so that, not content to endure the pains that were inflicted upon them, they besought, they provoked the executioners and the tyrants, to obtain from them an increase of torture, in order that they might show themselves more grateful to God who died for love of them.

Hence it came to pass, according to St. Justin, that in the course of three centuries the whole earth was filled with Christians and martyrs. "There is no nation, Greek or barbarian," writes the holy martyr to Trypho, "that does not offer prayers and thanksgivings to the Creator of the universe by invoking the name of Jesus Christ."[2] St. Irenaeus,[3] in like manner, attests that at his time the faith of Jesus Christ was extended over the entire world. Pliny, in his celebrated letter to the Emperor Trajan,[4] declared that the Christian faith was extended to such a degree that the temples of the gods were abandoned, and that victims were no longer offered to the idols. And Tiberian also wrote to the same emperor that it would be unwise to put to death all the Christians, since the number of those who were anxious to die for Jesus Christ was incalculable.[5]

From these facts Clement of Alexandria subsequently inferred, that if God himself had not upheld the Christian faith, it never could have withstood the efforts of so many philosophers who endeavored to obscure it with sophisms, or the violence of so many kings and emperors who labored to extinguish it by persecution. The number of Christians, far from having been

[1] "Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis."—*Eph.* v. 2.

[2] *Dial, cum Triph.*

[3] *sldv. Herres.* l. 3, c. 11.

[4] *Lib.* 10, *Ep.* 97.

[5] *Suidas, Hist. v. Trajanus.*

[6] *Strom.* l. 6

diminished by the slaughter of the saints, became so wonderfully increased, that Tertullian said: "Our number grows in the same measure that you decimate us; the blood of the Christians is a sort of seed."[1] He used the word *seed* because the blood of the martyrs was that which multiplied the faithful. Tertullian, indeed, boasted of this, and upbraided the tyrants with their impotency; since, notwithstanding all their endeavors to exterminate the followers of the Gospel, the streets, the forum, and even the senate, were filled with Christians. Origen likewise writes: "It is a thing worthy to be observed, and eminently calculated to excite wonder, to behold the steady progress of the Christian religion, in spite of the most untiring persecution and continual martyrdoms." "Greeks and barbarians," continues this celebrated writer, "the wise and the unlearned, voluntarily embraced it; from which we may conclude that its propagation was due to a power superior to the human."[2]

Before the end of the second century, we are assured by Tertullian, all nations *(universagentes)* had embraced the faith of Jesus. He makes special mention of the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, of Armenia, and of Phrygia, of Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cirenasia, and Palestine; the Gethuli, the entire of Spain, many of the Gallic tribes, Bretagne, the Sarmatians, the Dacians, the Scythians, and many remote nations, provinces, and islands.[3] Arnobius, who died a hundred years after Tertullian, adds to the list of those converted to the faith, the Indians, the Sarii, the Persians, and the Medes; Arabia, Syria, Gallacia, Acaja, Macedonia, and Epirus, with all the islands and provinces from the rising to the

[1] *Apologet,* c. 50.

[3] *Adv. Judaos.*
[4] *Adv. Gent.* 1. 2.

setting sun." Besides those regions enumerated by Tertullian, St. Athanasius, half a century afterwards, mentions others. Writing to the Emperor Jovinian, he says: " Know that this faith has been preached from the beginning, approved by the Nicene Fathers, and professed by all the Churches of the world—in Spain, in England, and in Gaul; throughout the entire of Italy, in Dalmatia, Dacia, Mysia, and Macedonia; in all Greece, and in all Africa; in Sardinia, Cyprus, Crete, Pamphylia, Lysia, and Isauria; in Egypt and Lybia, in Pontus and Cappadocia. With the exception of a few of the Arian faction, we may add all the nearer Churches, as well as those of the East."

Thus we see that, after the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors, which lasted for more than two hundred years, beginning from the first under Nero, the greater part of the human race, having abandoned the worship of false deities, had embraced the doctrines of Christianity. Finally, after so many struggles, it pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to grant peace to his Church under Constantine. This emperor was, after a miraculous manner, chosen by Heaven for the carrying out of the merciful dispensations of divine Providence. Having first overcome Maxentius, and afterwards Licinius, in the strong arm of the Lord,—for, as Eusebius relates, in whatever direction the *Labarum,* or standard of the cross, appeared, the enemy either fled or surrendered,—after peace had been established he forbade the Gentiles to sacrifice any longer to their idols, and caused magnificent temples to be erected to the honor of Jesus Christ. And oh, how glorious did not the Church then appear! still more widely extending her blessed influence, and, with every new conquest, bringing additional joy to the hearts of her once persecuted children! Then ceased the torments of the martyr, and with them the bitter calumnies of the idolater. Busy multitudes of zealous converts were to be

seen in every city destroying the idols which they once adored, pulling down the ancient shrines of superstition, and erecting new altars to the worship of the true God! The confines of so vast an empire were too narrow a limit for the active zeal of the great Constantine. He labored to propagate the saving doctrines of religion in Persia and among the barbarous nations he had subdued; nor would he, according to Eusebius[4] and Socrates,[5] grant them the amity of the Roman Empire, except upon the condition of their becoming Christians.

True it is that from time to time divers heresies have sprung up in the Church, which have been productive of much evil; but *the hand of the Lord hath not been shortened*[*] Even in these latter days we have had authentic accounts of many considerable acquisitions made by the Church, both among heretics and pagans. A learned author writes that ten thousand Arians have recently been converted in Transylvania. In Prussia an additional number of Catholic churches have been erected. In Denmark the public profession of the Catholic religion is now tolerated. The missions in England are being carried on with very happy results. We have been assured by persons of authority and undoubted veracity, that in the East forty thousand Armenian and other oriental heretics have been received into the communion of our holy Church; that in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Chaldea the number of Catholics is every day increasing; and that during the last few years several Nestorian Bishops have abjured the errors of that sect. Finally, during the present century a considerable number of Pagans have been converted in India and China.

[4] *Vita Const.* l. 2, c. 7, 45, 46.
[5] *Hist.* l. I, c. 18.

* No, certainly, " the hand of the Lord hath not been shortened;" we see this at all times displaying itself with a new lustre. At the time

But to return to the martyrs. The number of Christians who had received the crown of martyrdom, previous to the accession of Constantine, was almost in-

when St. Alphonsus wrote this sketch, more than a century ago, one of the most terrible trials to which the Church had to submit began by the suppression of the Jesuits, and ended in the French Revolution. The altar and the throne were overturned; the last trace of them was to be effaced; the blood of the martyrs flowed in torrents; the Sovereign Pontiff, despoiled of his States, was dragged into exile, where he died. The Church appeared annihilated in the eyes of her enemies, when she rose again with Pius VII., who, chosen miraculously at Venice, proceeded without hindrance to Rome and sat triumphantly on his throne in sight of an astonished world. His invincible patience, resting only on God, overcame all the artifices and all the violence of a tyrant who was then all-powerful, of whom God made an illustrious example of his justice and mercy. At the present day we see that three things are lying in the abyss opened by impiety to ingulf religion. These three things are Josephism, Gallicanism, and Jansenism. Not only is divine worship re-established in France, but this fertile land, notwithstanding the efforts of hell, produces a multitude of new institutions, fruits of the noblest zeal, such as the admirable work of the Propagation of the Faith. The same religious movement signalizes itself in other parts of Europe by many remarkable conversions, notably in Germany, Sweden, and England. The Catholic missions make progress nearly everywhere —in Africa, Asia, America, and Australia, and as far as the innumerable islands of Oceanica, where horrible cannibals become exemplary Christians. Corea counts more than ten thousand followers of Christ and one hundred and forty martyrs before it has even seen a priest; something nearly similar took place among the Indians of the Rocky Mountains iu northern Oregon. The pontificate of Pius IX., troubled as was that of Pius VII., is not less fertile in wonders of every kind; thus, among other things, at the moment of peril, a devoted band of young men came from different Catholic countries, closed around the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and did not hesitate to shed their blood in defence of the rights of the Holy See; and when the Holy Father was deprived of necessary resources there was established the Peter's pence, which extended from Belgium to all other countries, to assist in overcoming falsehood, hypocrisy, and brutal force that had conspired against the Church. The Church of God on earth is always militant; but each of her combats furbishes a new proof of the truth of the infallible words: " The gates of hell shall not prevail against her" *{Matt.* xvi. 18).—Ed.

credible. Many authors calculate the number of those who had laid down their lives for the faith to have been nearly eleven millions! So that if this number were equally distributed in the course of one year, thirty thousand would be allotted to each day.

Oh, the beautiful harvest of holy martyrs that paradise has reaped since the preaching of the Gospel! But, O God! what will be, on the day of general judgment, the confusion of the tyrants and of all the persecutors of the faith, at the sight of the martyrs once so despised and so maltreated by them, when these celestial heroes shall appear in glory, extolling the greatness of God, and armed with the sword of divine justice to avenge themselves for all the injuries and cruelties exercised against them, as was foretold by David: *The high praises of God in their mouths, and two-edged swords in their hands to execute vengeance upon the nations; to bind their kings in fetters, and their nobles in manacles of iron.*[1] Then shall the martyrs judge the Neros, the Domilians, and other persecutors, and shall condemn them; yea, as we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew, even to the *exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*[2]

But it will be for us a subject of more profitable meditation to reflect upon another scene which the great day of general and irrevocable doom will present—the despair of so many Christians who, having died in mortal sin, will behold with unavailing anguish the triumph of so many martyrs, who, rather than lose God, suffered themselves to be despoiled of all things, and underwent the most horrid torments that hell could suggest or

[1] "Exaltationes Dei in gutture eorum, et gladii ancipites in manibus eorum, ad faciendam vindictam in nationibus, increpationes in populis, ad alligandos reges eorum in compedibus et nobiles eorum in manicis ferreis, ut faciant in eis judicium conscriptum."—*Ps.* exlix. 6.

[2] "Ligatis manibus et pedibusejus, mittite eum in tenebras exteriores; ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium."—*Matt.* xxii. 13.

tyrants inflict; while they, rather than yield a point of honor or forego a momentary gratification, despised the suggestions of divine grace, and lost their souls forever!

II.

The Advantages of Devout Meditation on the Virtues that the Martyrs Practised during their Sufferings.

From an earnest consideration of the illustrious examples of virtue which the saints have given us during their martyrdom, oh, how much is to be learned!

I. By beholding, in devout meditation, the utter contempt in which they held the world and all the allurements of its pompous vanities, we are taught to despise the fleeting and unsubstantial pleasures which it offers to its deluded votaries. Many of them, previously to having been put to torture, had been offered by the tyrants immense rewards, posts of honor, and noble marriages, to induce them to abandon the faith. Yet they not only indignantly refused them, but willingly renounced the riches and honors which they already held, and offered themselves up to tortures the most excruciating and deaths the most ignominious, in order not to lose those heavenly graces which benign Providence fails not to impart to the servants of the Lord, as the earnest of the eternal blessings which shall be the recompense of their fidelity. To St. Clement of Ancyra the tyrant offered a great quantity of gold and precious stones if he would deny the name of the Lord Jesus; but the saint, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed: "And is it thus, O my God, that men treat Thee! —to compare Thee to dust and dross!" The pontifical dignity was offered to St. Theodore of Amasea, as the reward of his apostasy. The holy martyr, ridiculing the proposal, replied: "Pontifical dignity! I am about to enjoy God forever in heaven; and is it likely, think

you, that I should prefer remaining on earth, to follow the trade of a cook and a butcher to your false gods?"

II. From the example of the martyrs we learn also to place our confidence only in God, and to become daily more enamoured of the excellence of our faith: since in their constancy we cannot help admiring the wonderful power of God which enabled them to encounter torments and death with heroic fortitude and ecstatic joy. For without the interposition of the most powerful assistance from heaven, how could the delicate constitution of nervous persons, the tottering decrepitude of age, the timorous disposition of tender virgins, the recklessness of adolescent manhood, or the inconsideration of boyhood years, be equal to tortures, the bare recital of which fills us with horror? Caldrons of boiling oil and liquid pitch, red-hot coats of mail, hooks to pull out the eyes and teeth, iron combs to tear off the flesh; fires quickly to consume, or tediously to torture; scourging until bones and bowels appeared; beheading, quartering, lacerating, impaling—these were only some of the ingredients of the martyr's cup.

St. Barlaam, a poor laborer of a village in Antioch, having evinced extraordinary fortitude during his sufferings, and having been scourged until the executioners had exhausted their strength, was obliged by the tyrant to hold his hand over the flame that burned before the shrine of an idol. At the same time burning coals and incense were placed upon his hand, in the hope that he might be obliged by the pain to let them fall upon the altar, and thus afford them the opportunity of asserting that he had sacrificed to the idols; but the constancy of the saint was greater than their malice—he allowed his flesh to be burned to the bone, and expired in the effort.

St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom have eulogized this martyr.

St. Eulalia affords another instance of the wonderful

aid which the Almighty gives to those who are devoted to his service. She was a youthful virgin, of only twelve vears; the tyrant ordered her to be cruelly scourged, and then caused boiling oil to be poured into the wounds, and burning torches to be applied to her breasts and sides. During these tortures she ceased not to praise the Lord. Her joints were entirely dislocated, the flesh torn from her bones with iron hooks, and she was finally burned alive, having baffled the ingenuity of her inhuman executioners.

The martyrdom, also, of St. Vitus and St. Agapilus shows us the wonderful assistance of grace, which never fails the servants of the Lord. The former, when only fourteen yearsofage, was scourged, racked, and torn with irons. His father, who was a Gentile, wept with anguish to see hisson expire in such torments. " No, father !" exclaimed the boy, "I do not die: I go to live with Christ forever." St. Agapitus, also a youth, evinced the same fortitude : the tyrant threatened that he would place upon his head a red-hot helmet: "And what better fortune could await me," said the saint, " than to exchange your instrument of torture for a heavenly crown ?" Then the emperor ordered that red-hot coals should be placed on his head, that he be scourged, and be suspended by the feet over a thick smoke; he afterwards had boiling water poured over his breast, and finally had him beheaded.

The triumph of divine grace in the aged was manifested in St. Simeon, who al the age of one hundred and twenty endured lhe most excruciating torturesand expired on a cross, as is related by Eusebius of Cæsarea. St. Philip, Bishop of Heraclea, at a most decrepit old age, was dragged by the feet through the city, scourged till his bowels appeared, and afterwards burned alive.. The venerable martyr, till his last breath, ceased not to return thanks to the Lord, who had made him worthv to die for his glory.

III. From the patience which the martyrs evinced during their tortures, we should learn to suffer with holy resignation the crosses and afflictions of this life; poverty, sickness, persecution, contumely, injustice, and all other evils, are but trifling when compared with their sufferings. The reflection that it was the will of God that they should suffer for his love, was their only solace. We also in our tribulations should remember the necessity of resignation to the divine will; and, calling to mind the more grievous sufferings of the martyrs, should blush to complain. St. Vincent de Paul used to say: "Conformity to the divine will is a sovereign remedy for all evils.'"

It may be useful here to remark, with St. Augustine, that it is not the torture but the cause which maketh the martyr.[2] Whence St. Thomas' teaches that martyrdom is to suffer death in the exercise of an act of virtue. From which we may infer that not only he who by the hands of the executioner lays down his life for the faith, but whoever dies to comply with the divine will, and to please God, is a martyr, since in sacrificing himself to the divine love he performs an act of the most exalted virtue. We all have to pay the great debt of nature; let us therefore endeavor, in holy prayer, to obtain resignation to the divine will—to receive death and every tribulation in conformity with the dispensations of his Providence. As often as we shall perform this act of resignation with sufficient fervor, we may hope to be made partakers of the merits of the martyrs. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, in reciting the doxology in the office, always bowed her head in the same spirit as she would have done in receiving the stroke of the executioner.*

[1] *Abelly,* l. 3, ch. 9.

[2] "Martyres veros, non poena facit, sed causa."—*Epist.* S9, *E. B.*

[3] 2. 2, q. 124, a. 5.

* The same idea is repeated, page 39.

IV. The examples of the martyrs teach us also to have immediate recourse to the assistance of God, by earnest supplication, when we feel ourselves disconsolate or weak under affliction. Thus did the holy martyrs. As their torture increased, they multiplied their prayers and secured the victory. St. Theodore, after a long endurance of his tortures, was stretched upon burning tiles; feeling the pain penetrating to his very heart, he besought the Lord to mitigate the torture, and persevered to the end. There have, on the contrary, been examples of Christians, who, failing to invoke the assistance of the Almighty, have fallen off from the confession of the faith, and forfeited the glorious crown. An example is found in the acts of the martyrs of Japan. An aged man, having been condemned to a protracted martyrdom, endured the torture for a considerable time, but failing to invoke heavenly aid, denied his faith a few moments before he expired—a startling warning to all, that perseverance in prayer, in times of temptation and distress, is that which alone can insure us the victory.

V. But the most important lesson which we learn from the martyrs is the necessity of the love of God: *He who loveth not abideth in death.*[1] We cannot manifest our love of God so well by a multitude of actions performed for his glory, as by a willingness to suffer for his sake. St. Gordianus replied to the tyrant, who threatened to put him to death if he did not deny the name of Jesus: "You threaten death! but my greatest regret is, that I can die but once for Jesus Christ." In a similar manner, St. Procopius exclaimed to the tyrant, who was directing further tortures: "Torment as much as thou wilt, but know that to one who truly loves Jesus Christ, nothing is dearer than to suffer for his sake." "And did the saints speak thus," says St. Bernard, "because they were

1 " Qui non diligit, manet in morte."—i *John,* Hi. 14.

insensible to torments ? No," continues the holy Doctor, " they were neither frantic nor insensible, but their love of Jesus Christ caused them to esteem it all joy to suffer and to die for his glory." * This ardent love of God is certainly the greatest spiritual advantage to be derived from the perusal of the acts of the martyrs; the recollection of their conduct will make us ashamed to repine under the tribulations which divine Providence sends us, and will strengthen us to receive them with resignation.

VI. I add that death, which is the tribute that every one must pay, is the greatest of all our tribulations, and that makes not only sinners but the just tremble. Our Saviour himself as man wished to show the fear that he felt in the face of death, so that he began to pray to his Father to free him from it. But at the same time he teaches us to accept death according to the good pleasure of God by saying: *Nevertheless. not my will but thine be done?* The following is the way in which we acquire the glory of martyrdom: It is by accepting death toplease God and to conform to his will; for, as we have remarked above with St. Augustine, not the pain, but the cause of death, or the end for which one submits to it, is that which makes martyrs. It follows that he who dies, in courageously accepting death and all the pains that accompany it, to accomplish the divine will, though he does not receive death by the hands of the executioner, dies, however, with the merit of martyrdom, or at least with a very similar merit. It also follows that as often as any one offers himself to undergo martyrdom for the love of God, so often he gains the merit of martyrdom. We have seen above} the example of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, who when she inclined the head at the *Glory be to the Father,* imagined that at the same moment she was

' " Neque hoc facit stupor, sed amor."—*hi Cant.* s. 61.

* " Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu."—*Matt.* xxvi. 39.

* Page 37

receiving the stroke of the executioner. Hence we shall see in heaven a great number of saints doubly crowned with the merit of martyrdom without having been martyred.

VII. Finally, we should be moved to recommend ourselves every day, with great confidence, to the intercession of the holy martyrs, whose prayers are most efficacious with God. When we suffer some grievous pain, or when we desire a special favor, let us make a novena or a triduum in honor of rhe holy martyrs, and we shall easily obtain the grace. Let us not fail to honor them, says St. Ambrose; for they are our princes in the faith and our powerful intercessors.[1] If the Lord promises a reward to him who gives a drink of water to a poor man,[3] what will he not do for those who sacrificed their lives in the midst of torments! Let us here observe that the martyrs, before receiving the mortal blow, without doubt prepared themselves many times for the many tortures and for death, so that when they closed their earthly career they died with the merit not only of one martyrdom, but with the merit of all those martyrdoms that they had already accepted and offered sincerely to God. Hence we may imagine with what abundance of merits they entered heaven, and how valuable is their mediation with God.

A Prayer to the Holy Martyrs to obtain their Protection.

O ye blessed Princes of the heavenly kingdom ! ye who sacrificed to the Almighty God the honors, the riches, and possessions of this life, and have received in return the unfading glory and never-ending joys of heaven ! ye who are secure in the everlasting possession of the brilliant crown of glory which your sufferings have obtained !—look with compassionate regards upon

[1] "Honoremus beatos Martyres, principes fidei, intercessores mundi."—*Serm.* 92.

[3] *Matt.* x. 42.

our wretched state in this valley of tears, where we groan in the uncertainty of what may be our eternal destiny. And from that divine Saviour, for whom you suffered so many torments, and who now repays you with so unspeakable glory, obtain for us that we may love him with all our heart, and receive in return the grace of perfect resignation under the trials of this life, fortitude under the temptations of the enemy, and perseverance to the end. May your powerful intercession obtain forus that we may one day in your blessed company sing the praises of the Eternal, and, even as you now do, face to face, enjoy the beatitude of his vision !

III.

The Various Tortures to which the Martyrs were Subjected.

The Rev. Father Mamachi, in his erudite and labored work entitled "Manners and Customs of the First Christians,"[1] gives an account of all these tortures suffered by the martyrs, from the works of ancient writers who were their contemporaries, as St. Justin, Tertullian, Athenagoras, Origen, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Clement of Alexandria, and others. This author describes at much length the various species of torture employed against the servants of Jesus Christ during the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors; we shall be more brief, as our intention is merely to show how rich in merit those sainted heroes closed their earthly career.

I. THE MARTYRDOM OF THE CROSS.

Some were crucified in an erect posture, as was our Lord Jesus Christ; others with the head downwards, as St. Peter, according to Eusebius, who relates this on the authority of Origen ; others in the manner in which the martyrdom of St. Andrew is represented. Many were made to pass their arms under the transverse beam of

[1] L. 2, ch. 6.

the cross, and had their hands nailed upon the upper part. Some were suspended from a tree by the hands, their arms having been first tied behind their backs, and heavy weights attached to their feet. Women were hungup by the hair, the agony of which torture was sufficient to cause death; others were hung by one or both feet, with the head downwards, and in many cases a large stone tied round the neck; finally, many had their hands nailed to a beam, with enormous weights at their feet.

2. THE MARTYRDOM OF FIRE.

Some were placed upon gridirons, others plunged into caldrons of boiling oil or pitch. Many were suffocated with smoke, or dressed in a garment smeared with some combustible matter, and so burned at a stake. Some were cast into fiery furnaces; more were crowded into a ship, which was set on fire at sea; others were inclosed in a brazen bull and roasted alive; more were tortured by red-hot plates of iron applied to their sides; some, finally, were thrown upon the earth, and molten lead poured over them, or were impaled upon a spit, and roasted before a slow fire.

3. THE TORTURE OF THE SCOURGE.

Scourges were of various kinds—of leather, of cane, of the tendons of oxen, of iron links, and sometimes of rods of iron, shaped like thorns, which were called *scorpions.* The martyrs were generally tied to a post, or between four posts, to increase their punishment; but some were placed in a kind of stock. This stock consisted of two large pieces of wood, one above the other, between which the feet of the sufferers[1] were confined,

[1] There was another instrument of torture which is called in Latin *Xervus.* It was a wooden machine destined to confine the feet, and sometimes the neck and the hands; it had several holes at different distances from one another. Hence it is said of certain martyrs that their feet were stretched as far as the fourth or fifth hole._ Ed.

and in this torture they were sometimes scourged, others were thrown with their backs on a table filled with large nails, then struck with sticks or rods.

4. THE TORTURE OF THE IRONS.

These were iron hooks on which the Christians were suspended, and iron claws that served to tear them to the bone and to their very entrails. Other instruments were destined to pull out all their teeth, one after the other. Their flesh was lacerated with iron combs, or they were flayed. They were tied to the ground and were cut with blows of the hatchet, or their members were gradually cut to pieces, from the toes till their thighs, and from the fingers to the breasts, so that nothing was left but the trunk. They were stretched with their backs against a wheel that made them move on sharp irons fixed in the ground ; or they were tied upon a table, then disembowelled, and their intestines taken out.

5. OTHER TORTURES.

The martyrs were also tortured on the rack, and with other torments. Sometimes they were exposed to the sun, their bodies being rubbed with honey so that they might be stung by the flies and wasps. They were made to die in different ways. They were stoned, beheaded, strangled, drowned. There were some who were tied to two trees that had been bent by main force, which when released would tear them to pieces. Others tied in a bag were thrown into the sea, or thrown to the dogs or wild beasts. Some were made to die under the press; others perished from hunger.[1]

[1] In Part II. we shall sec several other tortures invented by the refined cruelty of the Japanese.—Ed.

PREFACE.

It is not our intention to give, in this work, a history of all the martyrs who have glorified the Church; but, without subjecting ourselves to any order of time or of persons, merely to relate the victories of some saints who showed the greatest courage in their combats, and suffered the most horrible tortures that could have been invented by the tyrants.

In some of our narrations the reader may find himself at a loss to account for such barbarity and fierceness as the tyrants practised upon the martyrs, whose innocence and meekness might be expected to save them from persecution. Let us consider whence this fury came.

It at first originated in the hatred which the Pagans bore towards Christians, whose virtues were the strongest censure upon their infamous lives.

It was also caused by the instigation of the devils who vehemently abhorred these pious athletes, the more their example served to propagate the faith and induced the rest to imitate them.

The principal reason of this persecution was the hatred that these tyrants conceived against the martyrs

[1] This holds good only of Part I.; in Part II. the author has followed a chronological order, but we may everywhere see that he has taken care to vary the subjects, according to the condition of persons, of their country, of their manner of death; for instance, a distinguished old man, the Bishop of Antioch, is transported to Rome to be devoured by beasts; now a young woman with her child is beheaded in Asia Minor; then a generous deacon undergoes various tortures in Spain; etc.—Ed.

in seeing themselves overcome by children, by tender virgins, by simple and ignorant men, who upbraided them with their insanity in following a false religion, which authorized every vice, and called upon them to worship as gods men who, during their lives, had given the most horrid examples of turpitude and crime that ever human nature revolted at.

Their rage was yet more increased at the sight of the very many miracles wrought through the servants of the true God ;—they saw wild beasts cast themselves at the feet of the martyrs; they perceived that red-hot coals, molten lead, did not burn them, and witnessed other similar prodigies. In vain did they cry out : "This is magic; these are incantations;" the people were converted in the presence of these miracles, and thousands of them embraced the faith ; and this re-doubled the irritation of the judges.

They believed that they were frightening the Christians by inventing new tortures, and flattered themselves that they were extinguishing the faith by putting to death all Christians. But the more they multiplied tortures and immolated victims, the more did the number of the faithful increase. Tertullian relates that a certain governor in Asia, named Arrius, was putting to death those who confessed the name of the Lord Jesus, when such a multitude presented themselves before his tribunal as caused him to shudder at the thought of shedding so much blood ; he therefore contented himself with putting a few of them to death, and to the rest he said: "If your desire of death be so irresistible, there are precipices enough from which to fling yourselves. Begone !"

As I have already remarked, I do not intend to give a general history of the martyrs : I wish only to describe

| *Ad Scapul.*

the heroic acts of some of the most remarkable of them. No one should be astonished that at times I do not relate all the circumstances that are found in other books; I have only taken care to mention most authenticated facts, drawn from trustworthy authors, omitting a few particulars which I do not reject as being false, but which appear to me to be doubtful, as they are taken from uncertain and suspected acts. According to Cardinal Baronius,[1] "it is better to relate a few facts of undoubted certainty, than to risk the introduction of any dubious circumstances, by indulging in lengthy details, because the few facts given upon respectable authority will always be received with satisfaction by the reader, while the detection of any dubious matter would make him suspect even that which is in reality true."

In compliance with this excellent advice, we shall endeavor to select the best authenticated facts, while we intend to avoid, on the other hand, the extreme of scepticism. For such it would be to reject the testimony of an author whose authority is generally received, or who has the characters of antiquity, probity, learning, and exactness.

I say this because there are certain writers who seem to take merit to themselves by doubting everything. An accurate discrimination in the selection of facts and authorities is a homage due to truth; but even this may be carried to an excess bordering on scepticism; for as it is a weakness to put faith in everything we find recorded, without the concurrent testimony of competent authority, so, on the other hand, it is rashness to receive everything with doubt. We should not refuse belief to the wonderful acts of the martyrs; but on the contrary, we should be persuaded that God can work in his saints

[1] *Ibid.* 307.

more wondrous effects than the weakness of our understandings can comprehend.

In describing the following triumphs of the martyrs I have with the utmost diligence consulted the most learned and accurate authors. I have retrenched all superfluous words as well as certain unimportant details, and have endeavored to present clearly and concisely only the substance of the facts, selecting those that most abound in generous traits and in useful instruction; in a word, those that are most conducive to spiritual edification.

part i.

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CHAPTER I.

ST. IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH.

February I.

St. Ignatius, also called Theophorus, that is, *one that carries God,* lived in the first century of the Church. He was a disciple of the apostles, particularly of St. John; by them he was baptized, and subsequently ordained Bishop of the Church of Antioch which had the honor of having been founded by the Apostle St. Peter, and as the place where the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called Christians.

St. Ignatius undertook the government of this church after the death of Evodius, the successor of St. Peter, which occurred in the year of the Lord 69 ; although Cardinal Orsi cites the opinion of some who would have it that St. Ignatius was the immediate successor of St. Peter. Our saint governed his flock with such zeal that all the churches of Syria consulted him as an oracle. In the persecution of Dbmitran he had to suffer much, and labored, at the risk of his life, for the preservation of the faith, animating his flock to be faithful to the death. He longed for the glory of martyrdom, fre-

' *1stor. eccl.* 1. 3, n. y.

quently saying that he could not be persuaded of his love for Christ till he had testified it with his blood.

Upon the death of Domitian in the year 96, the tempest abated under Nerva, his sucessor. But during- this time heretics did not cease to trouble the Church ; this is the reason why the saint, writing to the faithful of Smyrna, recommended them not to have any communication with them : " Be satisfied," he said to them, "with merely praying to God for those who abstain from the Eucharist, because they deny it to be the flesh of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins."

In the year 105 the persecution was renewed by the Emperor Trajan. This prince, after his conquest of the Scythians and the Dacians, published an edict which obliged all, under pain of death, to offer sacrifice to the gods. Marching afterwards against the Parthians, he arrived at Antioch ; and, hearing with how much zeal and success St. Ignatius propagated the Christian religion, he called him to his presence and thus addressed him: "Art thou that wicked demon called Theophorus, who taketh pleasure in violating our edict of sacrificing to the gods, and dost continue to seduce the inhabitants of this city by preaching the law of Christ?" Ignatius replied: "Yes, prince, I am called Theophorus ; by no one can Theophorus be called a demon, because the devils fly from the servants of God. If thou callest me a devil because I endeavor to defeat the machinations of the devil, I well deserve the name." Trajan asked him the signification of the term *Theophorus;* the saint replied, "It signifies 'the bearer of God.' " The emperor replied : " Thou carriest God in thy heart ; and we, have we not also in ourselves the gods that assist us?" The saint answered with enthusiasm : "It is an error, O prince! to give the name of gods to the demons that you adore : there is only one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth,

and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son." The emperor replied, "Dost thou speak of Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" "Yes," answered the saint, "of Him I speak who has confounded the malice of devils, and placed them beneath the feet of those Christians who carry God in their hearts." He added that Trajan would be more happy, and his empire more prosperous, if he would believe in the Lord Jesus; but the emperor, heedless of these exhortations, offered to make him a priest of Jupiter and a member of the senate if he would sacrifice to the gods. The saint replied that he was content to be a priest of Jesus Christ, for whom he ardently desired to shed his blood. Trajan, filled with anger, then pronounced sentence upon the saint—that he should be conducted in chains to Rome, and devoured by wild beasts at the public games.

St. Ignatius having heard the sentence, raised his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed: "I thank Thee, O Lord. because that Thou hast vouchsafed to make me worthy of giving Thee a proof of my love by sacrificing my life for Thy faith; I desire, O Lord, that the beasts may hasten to devour me, that I may make to Thee the sacrifice of myself." He then stretched forth his hands to be chained, kissing the manacles as they bound him; and with tears recommending his church to God, he was conducted by the soldiers to Seleucia, and thence to Smyrna, accompanied by two of his deacons, Philo and Agathopodus, who are believed to be the authors of his acts. Wherever the saint passed, he ceased not his exhortations to the faithful to persevere in faith and prayer, to be enamoured of the riches of heaven, and to despise those of this earth. The Christians came, in great numbers, to meet him and to receive his blessing, especially the bishops and priests of the churches of Asia, who, as they perceived him going so joyfully to martyrdom, wept in the tenderness of affection. Hav-

bread of Christ." The saint was instantly devoured by lions, as he had desired to be, and at the moment of his death he was heard to invoke the adorable name of

Only the larger bones of his body were left; these were collected and brought to Antioch by his two deacons, to whom he appeared on the following night, resplendent with glory. His martyrdom took place on the 20th December, of the year 107. After the destruction of Antioch by the Saracens, his relics were removed to Rome, and placed in the Church of St. Clement where at the present day they are venerated with great devotion. His name has been inserted in the canon of Mass.

The acts of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius are found in the collection of Ruinart, entitled: *Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera.*

CHAPTER II.

ST. JULITTA, AND ST. QUIRICUS, HER SON.

June 16.

St. Julitta was a noble lady of the city of Iconium, in Lycaonia. During the reign of the Emperors Dioclesiaii and Maximian, a most cruel tyrant called Domitian was governor of the province. While the persecution was raging most violently, St. Julitta took her infant son Cyr,[1] only three years old, and accompanied by two female servants, fled for safety to Seleucia, in Isauria; where, however, she found Alexander, the Proconsul of Cilicia, who exercised a no less barbarous cruelty than Domitian against those Christians who refused to sacri-

[1] In Lat'n, *Cirycus* or *Quiricus.*

fice to the gods. The saint passed from Seleucia to Tharsis, where Alexander arrived about the same time. Having been recognized, she was arrested and conducted before the judge with the infant Quiricus in her arms. Fire and incense were produced, in order that, renouncing Jesus Christ, she might sacrifice; but the saint answered: "I am a Christian, and therefore am prepared to lose not only my property, but even my life, rather than deny my God." The judge frequently urged her to abjure her faith; but she who wished to compensate her temporal loss by the acquisition of eternal gains uniformly replied: "I am a Christian: I cannot deny Jesus Christ."

Alexander, infuriated by her constancy, ordered that the child should be torn from her embrace, and that she should be cruelly scourged; but the holy lady under this torture fervently and continually repeated: "I am a Christian: I cannot sacrifice to your gods." Quiricus, meanwhile, was beholding the agonies of his mother, and struggled to return to her embrace; but Alexander, to quiet him, placed him on his knee, and endeavored to kiss him. The child, however, kept his eyes fixed continually upon his parent, and by plunging and kicking, tried to free himself from the tyrant, crying out at the same time: "I also am a Christian." The inhuman wretch dashed the child from him, and the agonizing mother, seeing the steps of the throne bespattered with the blood and brains of her infant, exclaimed: "I give Thee thanks, O my God! for having called my boy before me to Thyself."

The brutal judge, still more infuriated by this exclamation, caused her sides to be torn with iron hooks, and boiling pitch to be poured upon her feet. Meanwhile one of the bystanders said to her: "Julitta, have pity upon thyself; perish not as thy son has perished; sacrifice to the gods." "I cannot," she replied, "sacrifice to

devils and to mute statues. I adore the Lord Jesus, and wish to meet my son in heaven;" upon which the judge decreed that she should be beheaded. This sentence filled the saint with joy. Arrived at the place of her last struggle, she cast herself upon her knees, as Father Massini relates in his beautiful work of the lives of the Saints, according to the acts of the martyrs by Ruinart. She then prayed after the following manner: "O God, who hast been pleased to admit my child to a participation of the glory of Thy saints, turn Thine eyes of mercy towards me also, and grant me a place among the souls destined to love Thee and adore Thee forever." Having finished her prayer her head was at once cut off. It is thus that Julitta, with her heart all inflamed with holy love and full of joy, consummated her sacrifice in the year 304.[1]

[1] We think it our duty to rectify several passages of this narration, in which the author has confused two holy martyrs of the same name and of the same period, but not of the same place. She whose victory St. Basil describes in his homilies was of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, when she was denounced as a Christian by the spoliation of her property, and then condemned to be burnt alive, because she had steadfastly refused to offer incense to the idols, as we read in the martyrology, July 30. This was at the beginning of the persecution of Diocletian in 303. She was courageous enough to place herself at once on the funeral pile.

After the execution her body was found entire, without change; then it was interred in the vestibule of the cathedral church, where afterwards a fountain sent forth miraculous water which healed many sick persons. All these circumstances have reference to St. Julitta of Cæs.irca.—As for St. Julitta of Iconium, the mother St. Cyr, the martyrology mentions her, June 16. She was recognized and arrested as a Christian on her arrival in Tharsis. After seeing her son perish in a manner so cruel and yet so consoling, she was subjected to various tortures, and terminated her triumph by being beheaded. Her body and that of her son were then cast out of the city with those of other criminals; but her two servants who had taken flight and had hidden themselves, came secretly, carried them away, and carefully buried them in the field. Later on, when peace was restored to the Church, under the great Constantine, one of them who was yet living discovered the precious deposit, which became

CHAPTER III.

ST. VINCENT, DEACON.

January 22.

St. Vincent, one of the most celebrated martyrs ot Spain, was born in Saragossa, of one of the most respectable families of that city. While very young, he was placed under the tutelage of Valerius, Bishop of that church, who with great pains instructed him in the doctrines of religion, giving him at the same time a very extensive acquaintance with human science. Vincent, having made wonderful progress in learning, was ordained deacon by this prelate, who being himself prevented from preaching by an impediment in his speech, entrusted this office to Vincent. The young Levite discharged this important duly with such success that a great number of sinners, and even of pagans, was converted at his discourses.

At that time, namely, in the year 303, Spain was under the rule of Maximian; and Dacian was governor of the province of Tarragona, in which Saragossa was situated. This Dacian was a most cruel man, and an unrelenting persecutor of the Christians. Hearing of the manner in which Vincent advanced the Christian faith, he had

the object of the veneration of the faithful. Oom Ruinart and the other authors cited by St. Alphonsus are in accord with these facts, the narrative of which is drawn from a letter of Theodore, Bishop of Iconium. Giry and Butler add that St. Amator, Bishop of Auxerre from 388 till 418, carried to France the relics of St. Cyr and of St. Julitta, and distributed them in several places, especially at Nevers, Toulouse, St. Amand in Flanders, etc. Churches and monasteries were consecrated in their honor, and they were venerated in the West as well as in the East.—Ed.

him arrested, together with his Bishop, Valerius, and brought to Valencia, where he resided. He caused them to suffer much in prison, thinking that by maltreatment he would render them easier to be tampered with, but he soon perceived that this means did not correspond to the end he had in view. When they had been brought into his presence, he first endeavored by kindness to induce them to apostatize. To Valerius he represented that his declining age and infirmity required that repose which he might obtain by obeying the imperial edicts, but if he resisted he would feel the effects of their just anger. Then turning to Vincent he said: "You are young, and should not despise the reward of fortune which you may earn by abandoning your religion. Obey, young man, the commands of the emperors, and do not, by refusal, expose yourself to an ignominious death."

Whereupon Vincent, turning to Valerius, who as yet had made no reply to the governor, said: "Father, if thou wilt, I shall answer for thee." The saintly bishop, resolved to suffer for Jesus Christ, replied: "Yes, my son, as I formerly entrusted to thee the preaching of God's holy word, I now charge thee to manifest our faith." The holy deacon then declared to Dacian that they adored one only God, and could not worship the gods of the empire, who were devils, adding: "Do not think to shake our fortitude with threats of death or promises of reward, because there is nothing in this world which can be compared with the honor and pleasure of dying for Jesus Christ." Dacian irritated by such liberty of speech said to the holv deacon: "Either you must offer incense to the gods or you must pay with your life the contempt that you show." To this Vincent, raising his voice, replied as follows: "I have already told you that the greatest pleasure and the most distinguished honor that you can procure for us is to make us die for Jesus

Christ. You ma
Aiding torments sooner than we of suffering them."

Dacian condemned Valerius to banishment, and resolved to wreak his vengeance upon Vincent.

He first caused him to be stretched upon the rack, by which horrid machine the saint's arms and feet were so distended, that the bystanders could hear the noise of the dislocation of his joints, which remained attached only by the over-stretched and relaxed sinews. Dacian perceived the placid meekness with which the young martyr endured his torments, and, as Fleury observes, heard him say, "Behold, what I have ever desired is now being accomplished! Behold the happy consummation of what I have always sighed for!" The tyrant hence concluded that the executioners were remiss in making him feel the torments, and caused them to be beaten with rods.

He then commanded that the sides of the saint should be torn with iron hooks, until the ribs should be visible; and, knowing how much the pain would increase by allowing the wounds to cool, and then opening them afresh, he ordered this torture, which was infiicted with great cruelty, until the bowels appeared, and the blood fiowed in torrents. Meanwhile, as Orsi relates, the martyr insulted the tyrant, saying: "Since thy cruel ministers have exhausted their strength, come, thou chief butcher, and help them;—stretch forth thy wicked hands and slake thy thirst in my blood. Thou art deceived, thinking that torments can overcome my faith—within me there is another man strengthened by God, whom thou canst not subdue."

Hereupon, seeing his constancy, Dacian ordered a cessation of his tortures, begging of the saint, for his own sake, that if he persisted in refusing to sacrifice to the

gods, he would at least give up the sacred books to be burned. X^incent answered that fire was not created by God to burn holy books, but to torture the wicked forever: nor did he hesitate to admonish him, that if he did not abandon the worship of idols, he would be one day condemned to eternal flames. The governor, more incensed than ever, condemned him to the most cruel of torments—that of being broiled on a species of gridiron studded with sharp points. The saint hearing this barbarous command, walked with joy to the frightful engine, in anticipation of his executioners:—such was his eagerness to suffer. Upon this gridiron the saint was stretched at length, and bound, hand and foot, while the fire burned beneath. Red-hot plates of iron were placed on his mangled flesh; and his wounds were rubbed with salt, which the activity of the fire forced deeper into his burned and lacerated body. In the midst of these tortures, the countenance of the martyr evinced the inward consolation and joy of his soul, while, with eyes raised to heaven, he blessed the Lord, and besought of him to receive his sacrifice. All admired the prodigious fortitude with which God inspired the holy youth, and the pagans themselves exclaimed that it was miraculous.

The effect that the spectacle of such patience produced obliged Dacian to remove him from the public view. Yet, not content with the tortures he had already inflicted, he caused him to be thrown into a dungeon, his feet placed very wide apart, in wooden stocks, the pain of which was so great that many martyrs died under it. His body was then stretched on potsherds, which, opening his wounds afresh, caused the most painful anguish. In order to weary his patience, strict orders were given that no one should be admitted to see or offer him the least consolation; but the saint at midnight perceived his dungeon illuminated by a celestial light, and perfumed by a heavenly odor. The Lord then sent his angels to

console him, to intimate that his tortures were at an end, and to assure him of the reward of his fidelity. The jailers, being awakened by the splendor of the light, approached, and heard the martyr in concert with the angels rendering praises to the Lord. They believed and avowed the Christian faith.

Dacian being informed of this, ordered that the saint should be removed from prison to a soft bed, and that his wounds should be healed, with the intention of renewing his torments when he would be sufficiently recovered to bear them. The faithful being permitted to visit and console him, kissed his wounds and absorbed the blood in their napkins, which they preserved as most precious relics. But the time for our saint's triumph had arrived, and he expired in the embraces of his brethren; while his soul was wafted, by the angels who had assisted him, to the regions of everlasting bliss.

The tyrant on hearing of his death commanded that his body should be exposed to be devoured by wild beasts; but a raven was sent by God to defend it with its claws and beak, even against a wolf that had come to devour it. Dacian having exhausted his malice, ordered that the body should be put in a sack, and, with a heavy stone tied to it, cast into the sea; but there is no power against the Lord—the body floated like a feather on the water and was carried by the waves as far as Valencia. The mariners tried to get possession of it, but before they could reach it, it was carried by the waves on the seashore and covered with sand.

The saint afterwards appeared to a pious lady named Ionica, and indicated the place where his body lay. She went there, accompanied by other Christians, and finding the relics, deposited them in a little chapel; after the persecution had ceased, they were translated to a magnificent church outside the walls of Valencia, where they

have always been regarded with devout veneration. St. Augustine attests that at his time the feast or St. Vincent was celebrated with a special joy in all the countries whither the Christian religion had penetrated.[1]

The acts of the martyrdom of this great saint are among the number of those that Ruinart has transcribed.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. AGRICOLA AND ST. VITALIS, OF BOLOGNA.

November 4.

St. Agricola was a gentleman of the city of Bologna at the time of the persecution of Diocletian. He led a very pious life; by his universal kindness he conciliated to himself the esteem and affections of all, even the pagans. He had in his service a very holy man, called Vitalis, who served him with great fidelity. As they both ardently loved Jesus Christ, they assisted each other in the practice of virtue, and encouraged each other to shed their blood for the faith, when God should so ordain it. But it was the lot of Vitalis to obtain the crown first—to go before, as St. /Xmbrose says, and prepare a place for his master in heaven.

The enemies of the faith having seized him, tortured

[1] "Quæ hodie regio, quousque Christianum nomen extenditur, natalem non gaudet celebrare Vincentii ?"—*Serm.* 276, *E. B.*

* About the year 864, adds Alban Butler, the relics of St. Vincent were carried to the abbey of Castres, in Languedoc to withdraw them from the sacrilegious fury of the Moors; part of them were given to the abbey of St. Germain-dcs-Prés; those that were deposited at Castres were burnt by the Huguenots about the end of the sixteenth century. Aimon, who wrote the history of the translation of these holy relics from Valencia to Castres, relates several miracles that attended it.—En.

him so cruelly that his entire body was one wound; but Vitalis remained firm to the death. As the termination of his struggle approached, the Lord Jesus sent an angel to show him, in a vision, the crown which was being prepared for him in heaven. Whereupon Vitalis, with his dying breath, pronounced this prayer—"Jesus, my Saviour, and my God ! command my longing soul to come to Thee, to receive the crown which has been shown me by Thy angel." Having uttered these words, he expired.

The persecutors vainly hoped that by the torments and death of Vitalis they would induce his master, Agricola, to abjure the faith. They, however, soon discovered that all their arguments to induce him to obey the imperial edicts, by sacrificing to the idols, were vain; for Agricola, far from being dismayed by the cruelties practised upon his servant, derived from them greater courage, and a still more ardent desire to be made worthy of the crown that awaits those who lay down their lives for Jesus Christ. He had the happiness of dying, like his Saviour, nailed to a cross.

The bodies of these two martyrs, together with the instruments of their martyrdom, were buried in a cemetery, where they lay unknown until it pleased God to manifest the place of their burial to St. Ambrose. This holy bishop, when passing through Bologna, in the year 393, found the depository of these precious relics, and transferred them, with becoming solemnity, to a neighboring church. He took a portion of the blood of the martyrs, and of the cross of St. Agricola, which he had found in the sepulchre, and carried them to Florence, and placed them under the altar of a church which he afterwards consecrated in that city.

St. Ambrose preached upon the occasion, and from his sermon these factshave been extracted. They are to be found also in Ruinart.

CHAPTER V.

ST. VITALIS OF RAVENNA.

April 28.

Another holy martyr by the name of Vitalis was a citizen of Milan, of noble descent; the entire family were Christians, and his conduct was most exemplary. He had served in the army of the emperor, and was consequently on terms of friendship with Paulinus, the consul, trusting to whose favor he assisted the persecuted Christians, succored them in their need, and visited them in their prisons or in the caverns where they lay concealed.

Paulinus was a great enemy of the Christians, but, not knowing that Vitalis was one, invited him to travel to Ravenna. On their arrival our saint heard that a certain Christian, named Ursicinus, by profession a physician, had been condemned to torture, and seemed frightened at the approach of death. Vitalis, leaving the consul, ran to the spot, and finding Ursicinus almost ready to yield, exclaimed: "How is this, my friend? Thou hast the crown almost within thy grasp. Having already suffered so much, wilt thou miserably lose it? To avoid these short pains, wilt thou cast thyself into everlasting torments? Thou hast cured the maladies of others; wilt thou now condemn thyself to eternal death? Enliven thy faith! Have confidence in Jesus Christ! Bravely consummate the sacrifice of thyself." Upon this exhortation the constancy of Ursicinus revived, and he gave his life for Jesus; upon which Vitalis carried off his body and respectfully interred it.

Information having been given,to Paulinus of all that

had passed, he said to Vitalis: "How then ! art thou mad, to have acted as thou hast, not being a Christian ?" The saint instantly replied : "Nay, but I am a Christian, and am proud to be so. Nor am I mad either. He is mad who gives to wicked men the honor due to God. There is but one only God : this God we adore, and we glory in dying for his sake."

Paulinus loved Vitalis, but his hatred to the Christians prevailed over this feeling, and he ordered Vitalis to be imprisoned ; who, finding himself in the company of other confessors, made such manifestation of his joy, that Paulinus became infuriated, and commanded all his joints to be dislocated upon the rack, and his sides to be torn with iron hooks. During these tortures the holy martyr ceased not to preach Jesus Christ, whereupon he was thrown into a ditch and buried alive beneath a torrent of stones, on the 27th of April, of the year 171, according to Baronins.

As St. Vitalis expired, one of the priests of Apollo, who had incensed the tyrant against him, was possessed by a devil ; full of rage, he cried out: "Thou tormentest me, O Vitalis ! thou burnest me." Seven davs after, he cast himself into a river and was drowned.

The relics of this saint are deposited in a magnificent church at Ravenna, built upon the place of his martyrdom.

On the day dedicated to the honor of St. Vitalis, commemoration is made of his wife, St. Valeria, who, while returning from Ravenna, after the death of her husband, was so beaten and maltreated by the pagans for her faith, that she expired on the second day after her arrival at Milan. She is also honored as a martyr.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA.

January 26.

St. Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle St. John, and was born about the seventieth year of the Christian era. He was a Christian from his infancy, and on account of his extraordinary piety was greatly beloved by the apostles, his teachers. St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, writes that he had had the good fortune, when young, to know our saint, who was then far advanced in years, and remark show strongly impressed on his mind were the instructions which he had received from him, and with what delight he remembered having heard him recount his conversations with St. John and others who had seen the Redeemer.

St. Polycarp was consecrated Bishop of Smyrna by St. John himself before this apostle's banishment to the Island of Patmos. It is looked upon as certain that our saint was the angel, or Bishop of Smyrna, commended by the Lord in the Apocalypse: *And to the angel of the church of Smyrna write . . . I know thy tribulation and thy poverty; but thou art rich. . . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.* [1]

Our saint governed the church of Smyrna seventy years, according to Fleury,[2] with so much prudence and approbation that he was regarded as the principal of the Asiatic bishops, on account of the great veneration in

[1] "Scio tribulationem tuam et paupertatem tuam; sed dives es. . . . Esto fidelis usque ad mortem, ctdabo tibi. . . . coronam vitae."—*Apoc.* n. 9.

[2] *Hist. eccl.* l. 3, n. 48.

which he was held. When eighty years of age, he went to Rome to consult with Pope Anicetus on some points of discipline, particularly regarding the time at which Easter should be celebrated. St. Polycarp's delay in Rome was very useful to the faithful, as it afforded him an opportunity of confuting the heresies of that period. Meeting the heresiarch Marcion, who inquired of the holy bishop whether he knew him ; "Yes," answered the saint, " I know thee to be the first-born of the devil."

On his return to Asia, he suffered much in the persecution which the Emperor Marcus Aurelius raised against the Church, and which was particularly felt at Smyrna, where the proconsul, Statius Quadratus, was exercising the most barbarous cruelty against the faithful. Amongst other acts of persecution, he caused twelve Christians, who were brought from Philadelphia, to be devoured by wild beasts. Excited by this bloodshed, the pagans were loud in their demands for the slaughter of the Christians, particularly of Polycarp, who failed not on his part to encourage his flock to the most heroic proofs of constancy, in suffering torments and death for Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the continual clamor raised against him, the saint wished to remain in the city for the discharge of his pastoral duties, but was obliged, by the importunity of the faithful, to retire to a house without the city, where, during his stay, he occupied the entire night and day in holy prayer.

After a short time, however, he was discovered. Three days previouly to his arrest, he saw in a vision his pillow in flames, from which he knew that the martyrdom reserved for him was that of fire, and, turning to his companions, told them that he would be burned alive. The Christians, aware that the soldiers were in pursuit of him, removed him to another house; but a young servant, overawed by the fear of torture, revealed the place of

his concealment. The saint was informed of this, but refused to retreat any farther, saying, with holy resignation: "The will of God be done." Full of heroic zeal, he offered himself to God as a victim destined for his honor, besought him to accept the sacrifice of his life, and joyfully delivered himself up to his pursuers. He received them into his house, ordered them a handsome supper, and desired only some time for prayer, which being granted, he was for two hours absorbed in meditation.

The captain and the soldiers were filled with confusion at the sight of the venerable bishop; and unwillingly executing their commission, departed with him at break of day. As the journey to Smyrna was long, they set him on an ass, and were conducting him to the city, when they met on the road two superior officers, called Herod and Nicetas, who took him into their chariot, and endeavored to persuade him to obey the imperial edict, saying, among other things: "What harm is therein sacrificing to the gods in order to save your life?" The saint answered with fortitude that he would rather suffer every torture, even death itself, than consent to what they advised. Upon this resolute answer they turned away in anger, regarding him as a man lost through his obstinacy, and pushed him from the chariot with such violence that his leg was bruised, or, according to Fleury, broken by the fall.

The saint nevertheless, with undisturbed tranquillity of mind, proceeded to the amphitheatre, where he was about to sacrifice his life. Upon entering it he heard a voice from heaven, saying: "Be courageous, Polycarp; act manfully." He was presented to the proconsul, who endeavored to shake his resolution, saying: "Polycarp, thou art old, and should free thyself from torments which thou hast not strength to bear; swear, therefore, by the fortune of Cæsar, and exclaim with the people, 'Be the

impious exterminated!'" The saint immediately replied: "Yes! be the impious exterminated—but by the impious I mean the idolaters." The proconsul, thinking that he had gained him over, said: "Now blaspheme Jesus Christ, and I will discharge thee." The saint rejoined: "I have served Jesus Christ these fourscore and six years; he never did me harm, but much good; how can I blaspheme him? How can I blaspheme my Creator and my Saviour, who is also my judge, and who justly punishes those who deny him?" The tyrant, still continuing to tempt him to deny Jesus Christ, Polycarp replied that he was a Christian, and considered it a glory to die for Christ.

The proconsul threatened him with wild beasts. "Call for them quickly," replied the saint; "I cannot change from good to evil; the beasts will help me to pass from mortal suffering to the glory of heaven." "Then," said the tyrant, "thou shalt be burned alive." The saint answered: "Thy fire only lasts a moment; there is another fire whicn is eternal, and of that I am afraid. Why dost thou delay to execute thy threats?" This he said with so much intrepidity, that the tyrant himself was struck with admiration; he ordered, however, a crier to make public proclamation that Polycarp had avowed himself a Christian; whereupon the entire multitude of pagans cried out: "Let this destroyer of our gods die!" The public shows having terminated, it was resolved that he should be burned alive, instead of being devoured by wild beasts.

The pile was prepared by the pagans, and also by the Jews, who were particularly active in offering themselves as executioners. Polycarp put off his garments, and seeing they were about to fasten him to the stake, said: "Leave aside these nails: He who gives me fortitude to undergo this fire, will enable me to stand still without them." They therefore contented them-

selves with tying his hands behind his back, and placed him upon the pile, whence raising his eyes to heaven, the saint prayed after the following manner: "I bless Thee, O God, for having vouchsafed to make me a partaker in the Passion of Jesus Christ Thy Son, by rendering me worthy to offer myself as a sacrifice for Thy honor, that I may be enabled to praise Thee in heaven, and to bless Thee for all eternity." The pile was set on fire, yet the flames did not touch the body of the saint, but formed, as it were, an arch around him, while his flesh exhaled a most fragrant odor. The pagans, exasperated to see that the fire had no effect, transfixed him with a spear, and such a quantity of blood issued from the wound as extinguished the flames.

Thus did St. Polycarp terminate his triumph, as is recorded in the celebrated epistle of the Church of Smyrna, which may be seen in "Ruinart's Collection of the Acts of the Martyrs." His martyrdom took place about the year 160.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. THEODORA, VIRGIN, AND ST. DIDYMUS.

April 28.

St. Theodora, a native of Alexandria, was descended from noble and opulent Christian parents; she was born towards the close of the third century, and at the early age of sixteen years was distinguished for her beauty. Desirous oi having Jesus Christ alone for her spouse, she made a vow of perpetual virginity, and her many admirable virtues made her a model of perfection to the

other Christian virgins of her acquaintance. No sooner were the edicts of Diocletian against the Christians published in Egypt, than our saint was inflamed with the holy desire of sacrificing her life for Jesus Christ, and by prayer commenced to prepare herself for the great struggle, and to make frequent offerings of herself to God.

She was amongst the first of those who were arrested, and being presented to the judge Proculus, who was much struck with her beauty, was asked whether she was a slave or a free woman ; the saint replied that she was a Christian, having been freed by Christ from the slavery of the devil, and that she was also born of what the world called free parents. The tyrant, having discovered that she was of noble birth, inquired why she had not married. St. Theodora replied that she had abstained from marriage that she might live alone to Jesus Christ her Saviour. "But dost thou not know," continued the judge, " that it hath been commanded by the emperor that each one shall sacrifice to the gods, or else be condemned to the most infamous punishments ?" "And thou also knowest very well," rejoined the saint, " that God is careful of those who serve him, and defends them from contamination." Proculus continued to persuade her to sacrifice to the gods, threatening that otherwise the imperial edicts should be enforced. The saint answered as before, adding that she was consecrated to Jesus Christ, and would not abandon him though she were torn to pieces. "I am no longer my own," said she, "but His: He will defend me."

"Thou shalt pay dearly for thy obstinacy." said the judge; " what madness to place thy trust in a man who could not free himself from the death of the cross !" "Yes," replied the saint, "my confidence is placed in Jesus Christ, who hath suffered death to grant life unto us; he will preserve me from all evil. I fear neiiher tor-

ments nor death, but, on the contrary, I long to die for love of my God who died for me."

"But thou art of noble birth," said the judge, "and shouldst not dishonor thy family with eternal infamy." Theodora answered: "My glory is to confess the name of Jesus Christ my Saviour; he hath given me both honor and nobility; he knoweth how to preserve his dove from the hawk."

"Thou dost but trifle," said Proculus; "instantly sacrifice to our gods—be not insane." "I would indeed be insane," said Theodora, "if I were to sacrifice to devils and gods of brass or marble." Exasperated by this answer, the judge caused her to be buffeted, and said: "Thou wilt charge us with this dishonor; but thou shouldst not have dishonored our gods." "I do not complain," said the saint, "but rather rejoice at this opportunity of bearing insult for my Saviour."

"I shall give thee," said the tyrant, "three days to deliberate; after which, if thou wilt remain obdurate, punishment awaits thee." Theodora replied, "Thou mayest look on these three days as already expired; thou shalt find me the same then as now." The three days having expired, and the saint being still constant in her faith, Proculus said that he was bound to obey the edict, and commanded her to be conducted whither he had threatened.

Upon entering the infamous place the saint fervently recommended herself to Jesus Christ, and was heard; for Didymus, habited like a soldier, mingled in the crowd, and obtained admission to the room where she was. Upon seeing him, Theodora fled from him into several corners of the room; but Didymus said to her: "Fear me not, Theodora; I am not such a one as thou supposest; I have come to save thy honor and to set thee free. Let us change habits; take thou my clothes and depart; I will remain here in thine." Theodora did as she was de-

sired, and in her disguise joyfully departed from that place of infamy; holding down her head, she passed undiscovered through the midst of the crowd.

After some time, another young man, on entering the apartment, was astonished to find a man there instead of the virgin, and in his astonishment exclaimed: "Perhaps Christ changeth women into men !" But St. Didymus explained, and said to the idolater: "Christ hath not changed me from a woman to a man, but hath given me an opportunity of acquiring the crown of martyrdom. The virgin is out of your reach; I have remained in her place; do unto me as it pleaseth you."

The prefect being informed of this, sent for Didymus, and asked him why he had so acted. He replied ihat it was in consequence of an inspiration from God. He was then commanded to sacrifice to the gods, and to make known where Theodora was. He replied, that as to Theodora he knew not, and as to sacrificing to the gods, the judge had better put in force the imperial edict, since he would never sacrifice to devils, though he should be cast into a furnace. The prefect, incensed at this declaration, commanded that he should be beheaded, and that his body should afterwards be burned.

Didymus accordingly went to the place of execution, but at the same moment Theodora arrived, and with holy emulation contended for the crown. Didymus said: "It is mine, because on me hath sentence been pronounced." Theodora replied: "I was willing thou shouldst save my honor, but nut my life. I abominated infamy, but did not shrink from death. If thou hast intended to deprive me of martyrdom, thou hast deceived me." Finally, the judge ordered them both to be decapitated, and thus both received the crown of martyrdom.

The original Acts of this glorious martyrdom are transcribed by Ruinart.

CHAPTER VIII,

ST. PHILIP, BISHOP OF HERACLEA, AND HIS TWO COMPAN IONS, ST. SEVERUS AND ST. HERMES.

St. Philip was elected Bishop of Heraclea, the metropolis of Thrace, in consequence of his extraordinary virtue; and so fully did he correspond to the expectation of his people, that, while they tenderly loved him, there was not one among his flock who was not the object of his most affectionate pastoral solicitude. But there were two of his disciples whom he loved with peculiar affection—Severus, a priest, and Hermes, a deacon, whom he afterwards had companions of his martyrdom.

In the persecution of Diocletian he was advised to retire from the city. This, however, he refused to do, saying that he wished to conform to the dispensations of God, who knows how to reward those who suffer for his love, and that consequently he feared not the threats or torments of the tyrant. In the year 304 the saint was one day preaching to his people upon the necessity of patience and resignation, when a soldier, by the order of Bassus, the governor, entered the church, and having commanded the people to retire, shut the doors and sealed them; upon which Philip said to him: "Dost thou think that God dwelleth in these walls, and not rather in our souls?"

Philip, although unable to enter the church, was unwilling to abandon it altogether, and remained at the door with his people. Separating the good from the bad, he exhorted the former to remain constant in the faith, and called upon the latter to return to God by sincere repentance. Bassus, finding them assembled,

caused them to be arrested, and having demanded who was their master, Philip answered: "I am he." The governor said: "Hast thou not heard the edict of the emperor, that in no place shall the Christians be assembled, but shall sacrifice to the gods, or perish?" He then commanded that the gold and silver vessels, together with the books that treated of the Christian law, should be delivered up ; otherwise that recourse would be had to torture. Philip replied: " For my part, I am willing to suffer in this my body, tottering with age, whatever thou canst inflict; but abandon thou the thought of having any control over my spirit. The sacred vessels are at thy disposal; but it shall be my care to prevent the holy books from falling into thy hands." Bassus, infuriated at this answer, called forward the executioners, and caused the saint to undergo a cruel and protracted torture.

The deacon, Hermes, witnessing the agonies of his bishop, told the governor that, although he were possessed of all the hoi}' books, good Christians would never fail to teach Jesus Christ to others, and to render him the honor he deserves. After these words the holy deacon was most cruelly scourged.

Bassus commanded that the sacred vessels should be removed from the sacristy, that the Scriptures should be burned, and that Philip, with the other prisoners, should be led by the soldiers to the forum, to be executed, in order that the pagans should be gladdened and the Christians affrighted by the spectacle. Philip, having arrived at the forum, and being informed of the burning of the Scriptures, spoke at length to the people of the eternal fire prepared by God for the wicked. Duxiag this discourse, a pagan priest,.called jCataphroniift, came carrying some meats that had been sacrificed

forced to eat it, may be contaminated !" St. Philip desired him to be calm.

In the mean time the governor, arriving at the forum again, commanded the holy bishop to sacrifice to his gods. The saint asked: "Being a Christian, how can I sacrifice to marble?" "Sacrifice at least to the emperor," said Bassus. "My religion," said the saint, "commands me to honor the princes, but teaches me that sacrifice is due to God alone." "But doth not this beauteous statue of Fortune," said the governor, "deserve a victim?" The saint replied: "It may receive that honor from thy hands, since thou dost adore it; but it shall not from mine." "Let then," urged Bassus, "this fine figure of Hercules move thee." Here the holy bishop, raising his voice, rebuked the insanity of those who worship as gods statues that, being taken from the earth, like earth should be trodden upon, not adored.

Bassus, turning to Hermes, asked him if he at least would sacrifice. The holy deacon resolutely answered that he was a Christian, and could not do so; and having been told that, should he continue obstinate, he would be cast into flames, replied: "Thou dost threaten me with flames that last but for a short time, because thou art ignorant of the strength of those eternal flames in which the followers of the devil shall burn."

Bassus, exasperated at the constancy of the saints, remanded them to prison. As they went along, the insolent rabble frequently pushed the venerable and aged bishop, so as to throw him down, but he with joyous looks quietly raised himself again.

Meanwhile the term of Bassus' government having expired, Justin, his successor, arrived at Heraclea. He was a much more cruel man than his predecessor. St. Philip, having been brought before him, was told that if he would n6t sacrifice, he should, notwithstanding

his extreme age, have to suffer tortures that were intolerable even to youth. The venerable bishop replied : "Ye, for fear of a short punishment, obey men: how much more ought we to obey God, who visits evil-doers with eternal torments? Thou mayest torture, but canst never induce me to sacrifice." Justin: "I shall command thee to be dragged by the feet through the streets of the city." Philip: "God grant that it may be so." The bloody threat was executed ; yet the saint did not die in that torment, but his body was torn to pieces, and in the arms of the brethren he was carried back to prison.

After this the governor called before him Hermes the deacon, whom he exhorted to sacrifice, in order to escape the torments that were being prepared. But the saint replied : "I cannot sacrifice and betray my faith ; do, therefore, according to thy pleasure—tear my body to pieces." "Thou speakest thus," said Justin: "because thou knowest not the pains that await thee; upon a trial thou shalt repent." Hermes: "Atrocious though they may be, Jesus Christ, for whose love I am about to suffer, will render them not only light, but sweet."

Justin sent him also to prison, where the saints remained for seven months. Thence he sent them before him to Adrianople, and upon his arrival again summoned Philip to his presence, intimating to him that he had deferred his execution in the hope that, upon mature consideration, he would sacrifice. The saint boldly replied : " I have already told thee that I am a Christian, and I will always say the same. I will not sacrifice to statues, but only to that God to whom I have consecrated my entire being." Angered bjr this reply, the judge ordered him to be stripped and scourged until the bones and bowels were laid bare. The aged bishop suffered this torture with so much courage, that

Justin himself was astonished. Three days afterwards he was again summoned before the tyrant, who inquired why it was that with so much temerity he continued tc disregard the imperial edicts. The saint replied : " That which animates me is not rashness, but the love I bear my God, who one day shall judge me. In worldly matters I have invariably obeyed the rulers, but now the question is, whether I will prefer earth to heaven.] am a Christian, and cannot sacrifice to thy gods."

Seeing that he could not shake the constancy of the holy bishop, Justin, turning to Hermes, said : " This old man is weary of life, but thou shouldst not be so reckless of it: offer sacrifice, and consult thy safety." Hermes began to show the impiety of idolatry, but Justin hastily interrupted him, saying: "Thou speakest as if thou wouldst persuade me to become a Christian." " I earnestly desire," said the saint, "that this should happen not only to thee, but to all those who hear me."

Finally, the tyrant, perceiving that he could not win over these generous confessors, pronounced sentence in the following manner: "We command that Philip and Hermes, for having contemned the imperial edicts, shall ne burned alive." Sentence having been pronounced, the saints proceeded to the place of execution, evincing by their holy joy that they were two victims consecrated to the Lord. But from having been tortured in the stocks their feet were so sore that the holy bishop had to be supported, while Hermes with great difficulty followed, saying to Philip : " Let us hasten, Father, nor care for our feet, since we shall no longer have need of them." When they came to the place of their martyrdom, according to the custom of the country, they were placed standing in a trench, and covered with earth up to the knees, in order that they might not be able to flee from the fire. Upon entering the trench, Hermes smiled with holy joy, and the fire having been kindled

by the executioners, the saints began to thank Almighty God for their death, terminating their prayer and their martyrdom with the usual "Amen."*

Severus, who was the other disciple of St. Philip, had beenleft in prison while his holy bishop consummated his martyrdom in the flames; and having been informed of his glorious triumph, was deeply afflicted at not having been able to bear him company; hence he earnestly besought the Lord not to think him unworthy of sacrificing his life for his glory. His prayers were heard, and on the following day he obtained the desired crown.

The martyrdom of these saints is related by Cardinal Orsi,[1] who quotes Ruinart.

[1] *Istor. Eccl.* l. 9, n. 33.

* After the execution their bodies were found entire and fresh as in full health, without any trace of fire. St. Hermes, though a simple deacon, was a distinguished man. He had been first magistrate of the city of Heraclea, and had fulfilled the duties of his office with so much wisdom that he conciliated the esteem and veneration of all his fellow-citizens. After having renounced everything to devote himself to the service of the Church, he took the resolution to live only by the labor of his hands, like the great Apostle, and he had a son named Philip whom he brought up in the same principles. While the executioners were setting fire to the pile in which he was to be consumed, and perceiving one of his friends in the crowd, he called him and said: "Go, and tell my son: 'These are the last words of your dying father—words that he leaves you as the most precious marks of his affection. You are young avoid as dangerous everything that can weaken your soul; above all. avoid sloth; keep the peace with every one.'" The flames having risen prevented him from continuing. These details are given by Ruinart. —Ed.

CHAPTER IX.

ST. JAMES, SURNAMED INTERCISUS.

November 27.

The Christian religion had been for a long time persecuted in Persia, but during the reign of King Isdegerdes it had enjoyed a peace of twenty years. A certain bishop, named Abdas, set fire to a temple, in which was an idol worshipped by the Persians; and this circumstance gave rise to a fierce persecution of the Christians, since Isdegerdes, infuriated by the fact, gave orders that ail Christian churches should be levelled with the earth, and that all his subjects should profess only the Persian religion.

James, overcome by the fear of losing his property and the honors he enjoyed at court, obeyed the iniquitous decree. But his mother and his wife, most exemplary Christians, who were then absent, having heard of his fall, wrote to him a letter, in which, after exhorting him to repair his grievous error, they said : " If thou wilt not return to the good path from which thou hast departed, we shall treat thee as a stranger, and separate from thee; it behooveth us not to have any communication with one who hath abandoned his God to please men, and to secure to himself the perishable things of this life, which will cause him to perish everlastingly."

James, whose conscience continually upbraided him with his apostasy, was strongly affected by the letter; and he began to reflect that if his nearest relatives thus reproached him, how much more would he have to fear the censure of the Eternal Judge. While he bewailed the publicity of his sin, he resolved that his repentance

should be equally notorious, and took frequent occasion to express himself in the following terms: "I am a Christian, and I repent that I have abandoned the faith of Jesus Christ."

The king upon hearing this was much enraged, and considering himself personally offended by the insult offered to the gods whom he adored, ordered him to be conducted to his presence. The saint appeared before the tyrant, who reproached him with fickleness, and threatened him with the most cruel death unless he immediately sacrificed to the gods of the Persians. But the saint replied that he was a Christian, that he sincerely repented of his apostasy, and that he wished to continue no longer unfaithful to his God. The tyrant, in transports of rage, commanded that his body should be chopped to pieces, limb by limb, in order, as he said, that others might be deterred from following his example.

The saint intrepidly offered himself to this horrible torture. The executioner first cut off the thumb of his right hand, telling him that if he would obey the king his torments should cease there. But James was anxious to give his life for Jesus Christ, and to repair the scandal he had given by having denied him; presenting, therefore, each limb to the executioners, he suffered them to be cut off, joint by joint, without a moan. The faithful witnessed his martyrdom with great edification, until, his body being reduced to a mere trunk, his head was struck off. This happened on the 27th of November, in the year 420,[1] and from the nature of his martyrdom he was called *Intercisus,* that is, cut into pieces.

The constancy of this martyr makes us better understand the efficacy of the grace of Jesus Christ, since by

[1] This was, according to Alban Butler, in 421, during the reign of Vararancs V., son and successor to Isdegerdes, who died a short time after he had rekindled the fire of persecution in 420.—Ed.

it he was enabled to suffer this cruel butchery not only with resignation, but with great spiritual joy. All the martyrs were, of themselves and as men, vile and weak, but they were enabled by Jesus Christ, who strengthened them, to suffer their trials with fortitude, and to obtain the victory. Let us also have confidence in the assistance of Jesus Christ, and whenever we find our strength or courage to falter under trial or temptation, let us instantly have recourse to him, praying him to succor us by the merits of his precious blood. If we but do this with fervent faith we also may be sure of triumph. The martyrdom of St. James the Intercisus is related by Father Massini, who collected the particulars from his Acts in Surius, November 27.

CHAPTER X

ST. AERA THE PENITENT.

August 5.

The history of St. Afra is related by most respectable authors, such as Fleury,[1] Orsi,[2] and Massini.[3] Penitent sinners may receive great encouragement from the consideration of the fortitude communicated to this penitent by the Lord, which enabled her to suffer the martyrdom of fire; and also from the consideration of the wisdom given to her, by which she answered the insidious arguments that were intended to pervert her.

St. Afra was a citizen of Augsburg, in Rhætia (Bavaria), and a pagan of so dissolute a character, that her

[1] *Hist. eccl.* L. 8, n. 48. [2] *Istor. reel.* I. 9, n. 46. [3] *Race. di Ir.* 6 *agg.*

house and its inmates were used by her for the infamous purpose of corrupting the youths of that city. But the triumph of divine grace appeared the more brilliant in bringing this most wretched creature from the very lowest abyss of infamy to the glory of martyrdom.

It is believed that St. Afra, together with her mother and entire family, was converted by the holy bishop, St. Narcissus. From her Acts, found in Ruinart, it would appear that she had always before her eyes the deformity of her crimes, and was tortured by the recollection of them; so that when she had embraced the faith, she endeavored to get rid of the price of her infamy by giving liberally to the poor; and when some Christians, although in extreme penury, refused to receive from her what had been the wages of sin, she would beseech of them to accept it, and pray to God for the remission of her grievous offences. Thus did this holy penitent prepare herself to receive from God that glorious palm which she finally obtained.

The persecution of Diocletian was raging when St. Afra was arrested and brought before the judge named Gaius, who said to her: "Come now, sacrifice to the gods; it is better to live than to die amid torments." The saint replied: "The sins which I have committed before I knew the true God are sufficient; wherefore I cannot now do that which thou commandest. I never will do so: it would be adding a new insult to my God."

The judge having ordered her to repair to the temple, she answered with great «ourage: "My temple is Jesus Christ, whom I have continually before mine eyes, and to whom I every day confess my sins. Since I am unworthy to offer him any other sacrifice, I am anxious to sacrifice myself, in order that this body, with which I have offended him, may be purified by torments;—this reflection shall make me suffer most willingly."

"Since, therefore," said Gaius, "by reason of thy

wicked life thou hast nothing to expect from the God of the Christians, thou hadst better sacrifice to our gods." The saint replied: "My Lord Jesus Christ has said, that he descended from heaven to save sinners. We read in the Gospel, that a sinful woman, having washed his feet with her tears, obtained from him the forgiveness of all her offences; and, moreover, that he never rejected sinful creatures nor publicans; but, on the contrary, condescended to converse and even to eat with them."

The iniquitous judge was not ashamed to counsel her to return to her infamous practices, in order that she might gain the favor of her gallants, and enrich herself. "I renounce," said the penitent saint, " that execrable gain, and look upon it with horror. That which I had, I have cast from me and given to the poor, imploring them to accept it; how, then, can I consent to earn it again ?"

After this the discussion was continued in the following manner:

Gaius said: "Thy Christ esteemeth thee unworthy of him; in vain thou callest him thy God; he will have nothing to do with thee; a common prostitute cannot be called a Christian."

"True," replied Afra, "I am unworthy of this name; but my God, who chooseth not persons according to their merits, but according to his own goodness, hath been pleased to accept me, and make me a participator of his name."

Gaius: " And whence knowest thou that he hath done thee this favor ?"

Afra: " I know that God has not cast me off, since he has given me strength to confess his holy name; and I feel a hope within me that I can thus obtain the pardon of all my sins."

" These are foolish stories," replied the judge; " sacrifice to our gods; because they alone can save thee/

"My salvation," answered the saint, "depends alone upon Jesus Christ, who, while hanging on the cross, promised heaven to a robber that confessed his sins."

Gaius replied: "If thou wilt not sacrifice, I shall cause thee to be stripped and whipped publicly, to thy great shame."

Afra: "I am ashamed only of my sins."

"And I," said Gaius, "am ashamed to be losing my time in disputing with thee. Sacrifice to the gods, or I shall condemn thee to death."

Afra replied: "That is what I desire, since I hope thus to find an eternal repose."

Gaius threatened that if she would not sacrifice, he would order her to be tortured and burned alive.

The saint courageously replied: "Let this, my body, which hath been the instrument of so many sins, undergo every torment; but let my soul not be contaminated by sacrificing to demons."

The judge then pronounced sentence upon her, in the following words: "We ordain that Afra, a prostitute, who has declared herself to be a Christian, and has refused to sacrifice to the gods, be burned alive."

The place selected for the execution of this terrible sentence was a little island in the river Lech. The saint, having been conducted to this place, and the executioners having tied her to the stake, she raised her eyes to heaven, and prayed after the following manner: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who earnest to call, not the just, but sinners to repentance, and who hast vouchsafed to make known unto us, that, upon whatever day the sinner shall return to Thee by contrition, Thou wilt forget all his offences; receive me now, a poor sinner that offers herself to suffer this torture for Thy love. By this fire, which is about to burn my body, deliver my soul from everlasting flames." At the termination of this prayer, fire was set to the pile, and the saint was heard to say: "I give Thee

thanks, O Lord, who, being innocent, didst offer Thyself a sacrifice for sinners; and being the 'Blessed of God,' didst vouchsafe to die for us 'children of wra'h.' I give Thee thanks, and offer myself a sacrifice to Thee, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest world without end. Amen." Having concluded her prayer she expired.

Her three servants, Eunomia, Digna, and Eutropia, were standing on the banks of the river witnessing her martyrdom. As they had been partners in her vice, they had also imitated her in her conversion, and had been baptized by the holy Bishop St. Narcissus. Knowing that their mistress was now dead, they crossed over to the island; and the news having reached Hilaria, the saint's mother, she also came, accompanied by some priests: they took the saint's body and carried it to the family burying-place, two miles distant from Augsburg. Gaius, having been informed of this, sent a troop of soldiers with orders to arrest all who were at the burying-place, and, in case they refused to sacrifice, to shut them up in the sepulchre,[1] and burn them there. This barbarous order was cruelly executed, and thus all these holy women received the crown of martyrdom in the year 304.

[1] The sepulchres of the ancients, says Fleury, were high buildings, often large enough to contain rooms. St. Hilaria and the three other saints martyred with her are inscribed in the martyrology, August 12.—Ed.

CHAPTER XI.

ST. SABINUS, BISHOP OF SPOLETO, AND HIS COMPANIONS.

December 30.

The persecution under the emperors Diocletian and Maximian is considered as the most violent that the Churcn has had to endure; and yet the triumph of the Christian faith was never more glorious than under these two notable tyrants. It was considered as a capital offence for Christians to absent themselves from the public games; and not only in the principal towns, but even in the smaller villages, gibbets were prepared to execute those who would dare to confess the name of the Lord Jesus. Irons, scourges, racks, caldrons of boiling oil, and all the apparatus of torture were everywhere in readiness for those who refused to sacrifice to the idols. The cruelty of Maximian went so far as to ordain that in the market-places, in the mills, in the bakers' shops, and in the taverns idols should be set up, to which everybody should show some mark of idolatrous veneration, on pain of being arrested. Yet, notwithstanding this wholesale butchery, never were there seen greater multitudes of Christians professing a desire to suffer and to die for Jesus Christ; so that the number of holy martyrs amounted at that time to eight millions.[1]

St. Sabinus, who was, during this persecution, Bishop of Spoleto in Umbria, going through all the towns of his diocese, ceased not to exhort his flock to seek a union with God in holy prayer, that they might be enabled by his grace to suffer tortures and death in testimony of

[1] Of the number of martyrs mention was made on paire 33.

his holy faith. Venustianus, who was then governor of Tuscany, having heard of the pious labors of the holy Bishop, caused him to be arrested at Assisi, with his two deacons, Marcellus and Exuperantius, and others of the clergy.

Upon the arrival of this tyrant at Assisi, he summoned the bishop and his two deacons before him, and having inquired of Sabinus who he was, the saint replied: "I am the bishop, although an unworthy sinner." "And how," said the governor, "hast thou dared to teach the people to abandon the worship of the gods, and to follow a dead man?" Sabinus replied: "Thou knowest that he died, but dost not know that he rose the third day; and yet thou shouldst know it." The governor angrily exclaimed: "Sacrifice to the gods, or thou shalt die by torture as thou deservest: then mayest thou rise again like thy Christ." The saint answered: "This is my desire—to die and rise again, as did the Lord Jesus." Sabinus continued to preach Jesus Christ.

The governor, however, sent for an idol which he always kept by him—a small coral image of Jove, with robes sculptured in gold—and commanded all present to adore it; but Sabinus, animated with holy zeal, dashed the idol to the earth, and broke it to pieces. Venustianus, exasperated at this insult offered to his idol, caused both the hands of the holy prelate to be instantly cut off.

He then ordered Marcellus and Exuperantius to be put to torture, for having also refused to adore his gods. He had their flesh torn with iron hooks, and their bodies burned with lighted torches; in which torments they

St. Sabinus, who was present animating his companions, was sent to prison by the governor, in the expectation that he would die of the pain caused by the amputation of his hands, or perish by hunger, in case this should prove insufficient to cause death.

But a pious widow, called Serena, found means to support the holy bishop; and her charity was rewarded by the saint, who, by praying over her nephew, restored to him his sight. This miracle worked the conversion of fifteen prisoners who were present.

Venustianus, the governor, allowed the saint to remain unmolested for a month, being tortured by an excessive pain in his eyes. All remedies having proved useless, he was advised to have recourse to the saint, and accordingly sent his wife and two children to Sabinus. When the saint came to his house, Venustianus threw himself at his feet, beseeching him to forget the tortures w'hich he had caused him to suffer, and imploring at the same time the cure of his eyes. Sabinus told him that if he would become a Christian he should be relieved from the pain at his baptism. Venustianus consented, was instructed in the Christian religion, received baptism, together with his entire family, and instantly recovered.

St. Sabinus had the consolation of seeing this entire family receive the crown of martyrdom; for the emperor Maximian sent the tribune Lucius with orders to put Sabinus and Venustianus to death. Lucius upon his arrival at Assisi, without any trial whatever, caused Venustianus, with his wife and children, to be instantly beheaded; and brought Sabinus with him to Spoieto, where he had the holy bishop scourged to death.[1]

Serena, a noblewoman of this city, who had procured the hands, and had kept them embalmed by her, placed them with the body, and buried the saint at a place two miles distant from the city. A magnificent church

[1] According to certain authors, St. Sabinus consummated his martyrdom December 7, 304, although the martyrology mentions him on December 30. Giry adds that the virtuous Serena also obtained the crown of the martyrs some time after, and that she is honored at Metz, January 30.—Ed.

was subsequently raised over the place of his interment.

The martyrdom of this saint is related by Fleury in his Church History.[1]

CHAPTER XII.

ST. EUPLIUS, deacon.

August

St. Euplius obtained the crown of martyrdom in Sicily during the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian. He was arrested while reading the Gospel in the city of Catana, and brought before the governor, Calvisianus, with the sacred volume in his hand. The governor asked him whether he had brought those writings from his own house, or happened to have them about him. The saint replied: "I have no house; I carry them about me, and was arrested with them." The judge ordered him to read something from them; and the saint read the two following texts: *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.* And: *He that will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me.*[3] The judge inquired the meaning of these words. Euplius replied: "This is the law of God, which hath been given me." "By whom?" "By Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God." "Since, then, thou dost confess thyself a Christian," said Calvisianus, "I shall deliver thee to the executioners, that they may torture thee."

While the saint was undergoing the torture, Calvisianus said to him: "What dost thou now say of thy con-

[1] *Livre* 8, n. 39. [2] *Matt.* v. 10. [3] *Ibid,* xvi. 24.

iession ?" The saint replied: " That which I have said I now repeat: I am a Christian !" " But why," said the judge, " didst thou not give up those writings as the emperors have commanded?" "Because I am a Christian. I will sooner die than deliver them. In them is eternal life, which is lost by him who would betray what God has intrusted to his keeping." The tvrant ordered his tortures to be continued, and Euplius said: I thank Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ. Since I suffer for Thy sake, do Thou preserve me." The judge said: "Adore the gods, and thou shalt be set at liberty." The saint replied: " I adore Jesus Christ, and detest the demons. Torture as much as thou pleasest, still shall I proclaim myself a Christian."

After the saint had been tortured for a considerable time, the tyrant exclaimed: "Wretch that thou art! worship our gods; adore Mars, Apollo, Æsculapius." The martyr answered: " I adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one only God; besides whom there is no God. May your gods find no worshippers ! I offer myself a sacrifice to the true God; nor is it possible to change me." Calvisianus gave orders that his torments should be increased to the utmost; and while this was being performed, Euplius was heard to say: "I thank Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ. Since I endure these torments for Thy sake, do Thou succor me." Although, the agony of his torments caused his voice and strength to fail him, his lips still moved, as if he would repeat this prayer.

At last Calvisianus, seeing that the constancy of the saint was not to be overcome, commanded his head to be struck off. The book of the Gospels was tied round his neck, and, while he was proceeding to the place of execution, the public crier proclaimed before him: "This is Euplius the Christian, an enemy to the gods and to the emperors." But the saint ceased not to return

thanks to Jesus Christ, until he arrived at the place of execution, when, casting himself upon his knees, he said: " O Lord Jesus Christ ! I give Thee thanks for having granted me strength to confess Thy holy name. Complete, O Lord, what Thou hast begun, that Thy enemies may be confused." Then, turning to the people who had followed him, he said: " Brethren, love the Lord with all your hearts; for he never forgets those who love him. He remembers them during life and at the hour of their death, when he sends his angels to lead them to their heavenly country." Having said these words, he presented his neck to the executioner, who struck off his head, on the 12th of August, in the year 304. The Christians carried off his body, embalmed and buried it. The Acts of his martyrdom are found in Ruinart.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. THEODOTUS, VINTNER.

May 18.

By the example of St. Theodotus we are taught the important lesson, that there is no state of life in which a man may not become a saint. He was a citizen of Ancyra, the capital of Galatia, was a married man, and followed the humble calling of an innkeeper. Although his life presented to the eyes of the world nothing extraordinary, it was one of sanctity before God: since having been disciplined in the fear of the Lord from his youth, by a holy virgin called Thecusa, he practised temperance, chastity, and the mortification of the flesh, by fasting and other penitential works. As he loved poverty, he gave to the poor whatever he could afford; and his inn was the home of the needy, the asylum of the 'nfirm,

and a school of Christian piety. He converted many from the practice of a shameful vice and from other crimes, and also brought many, both Jews and Gentiles, to the profession of the true faith, a considerable number of whom arrived at the glory of martyrdom. He had likewise the gift of miracles, particularly that of healing the sick, which he effected by laying his hands upon them, and invoking the adorable name of Jesus.

The persecution of Diocletian was raging, and Theoteenus, a most cruel man, was governor of the province of Dalmatia. He commanded that all the churches should be demolished, and that all who were known to be followers of Jesus Christ should be slaughtered. The pagans, animated by the cruelty of the governor, entered the houses of the Christians, and plundered whatever they thought fit; and if any one dared to complain, he was accused of being a rebel. Every day Christians were put into prison, and even noble ladies barbarously dragged through the streets; so that many hid themselves in caves, or flew to the woods, living, like the beasts, upon wild herbs.

Theodotus remained in Ancyra, where he employed himself in assisting those who had been imprisoned for the faith, helping those in need, and burying the bodies of the martyrs. Moreover, as the governor had forbidden bread or wine to be sold to any one who was not known as an idolater, Theodotus supported the poor, and supplied the priests with bread and wine for the celebration of the Mass. Thus, by the charity of Theodotus, his inn became the temple and asylum of the Christians.

Having been informed that a certain friend of his, named Victor, had been imprisoned for the faith, he went by night to see him, and encouraged him, saying: "A Christian should have no other concern than firmly to maintain his faith." Having learned that most enticing promises had been made to him in case he would re-

nounce his faith, Theodotus said: " Believe me, my dear Victor, the promises which the impious make to us are for our perdition; they are intended to make us slumber in order that we may not see the eternal death to which they lead us." Victor, animated by this exhortation, went boldly to the place of torture; but having suffered for some time, demanded a respite to consider the pro posais made to him. He was accordingly brought back to prison, where he soon died of his wounds, leaving his eternal salvation in great doubt, to the inexpressible grief of Theodotus.

Some time after this sad occurrence our saint met a priest, named Fronto, in a country place called Mains, and told him that he thought it a most appropriate spot for placing the relics of the martyrs. The priest replied that the relics should be procured before the work would be undertaken. Theodotus said: " God will take care of that. Let it be thy concern to build the crypt, and the relics shall not be wanting." As an earnest of this promise, he gave the priest a ring from his finger, and returned to Ancvra.

Here he learned that the bodies of seven martyred virgins had been cast into a pond, and was miraculously assisted in releasing them; for there arose a strong wind that drove the waters to the sides of the pond, and discovered at the bottom the bodies of the saints, which he drew out and placed in a neighboring oratorv.'

Informations to this effect having been lodged against him, he voluntarily surrendered himself to the magis-

l These glorious victims of the most odious of tyrannies were all of an advanced age; but this did not hinder the tyrant from subjecting them, through hatred of their religion, to the most shameful indignities. Among them was particularly noticed St. Tecusa, of whom mention was made above; the names of the six others arc: Alexandra, Claudia. Faina, Euphrasia, Matrona, and Julitta. See the martyrology, May i8. —Ed.

trates. On entering the court the governor, Theotecnus, told him that if he sacrificed to the gods he would be made high-priest of Apollo, and be loaded with riches and honors. Theodotus, despising all, undertook to prove to the governor the greatness and sanctity of Jesus Christ, and the enormity of the vices which the pagans themselves attributed to their false gods. But Theotecnus, angered by this discourse, ordered that he should be stretched upon the rack, and that, one after another, the executioners should tear his flesh with iron hooks; after which vinegar was poured into his wounds, and lighted torches applied to his sides.

When the saint smelt the burning of his flesh he turned his head somewhat aside, which the governor mistaking for a sign that he was yielding to the torments, approached him and said: "Where now, Theodotus, is that daring thou didst so lately glory in? Hadst thou respected the emperor, thou wouldst not now be reduced to this piteous state? Vile innkeeper! thou shalt learn not to contend henceforward with emperors who have power over thy life." Theodotus replied: "If thou hadst arrested me for any crime, then I should fear. As it is, I fear nothing. Invent new torments, and my Lord Jesus Christ, for whose love I suffer, will grant me strength to disregard them." The governor enraged at these words, caused his jaws to be struck with a stone so as to beat out his teeth, upon which the saint said: "Although thou shouldst cut out my tongue my prayers cannot be interrupted, for God bears the Christians even when they are deprived of their speech." The governor having ordered him back to prison he showed his wounds to the crowd as he went along, giving them thereby to understand the strength which Jesus Christ imparts to his servants. "It is only reasonable," he said, "to suffer thus for our Lord, who has suffered so much for us."

At the end of five days, the governor, seated upon a

throne in one of the public squares, ordered the martyr to be again brought before him. He then commanded that his wounds should be reopened, his sides again torn with irons, and that in this stale he should be stretched upon red-hot tiles. The saint, says Cardinal Orsi [1] feeling a most excruciating pain, penetrating to his very bowels, prayed that the Lord would somewhat mitigate his suffering; and having obtained additional consolation, continued to endure this horrible torture with admirable fortitude.

The tyrant had him stretched upon the rack a third time, and caused him to be lacerated as before; but ultimately despairing of being able to overcome his constancy, condemned him to lose his head, and ordered that his body should be burned. Arrived at the place of execution, the saint gave God thanks for the grace which had enabled him to overcome his torments, and fervently implored peace for the Church. Then turning to the Christians, who had followed him with many tears, he consoled them, and desired that they should give God thanks for his victory, assuring them that he would not fail to assist them by his prayers in heaven. He then presented his neck to the executioner, and received the crown. His body was placed upon a funeral pile to be burned, but appeared surrounded with a light so supernaturally resplendent that no one dared approach it. It was therefore left guarded by soldiers.

Upon that same day the priest Fronto arrived in Ancyra with the ring which Theodotus had given him, as an earnest that God would supply relics for the place previously prepared at Malus. He had with him an ass laden with excellent wine, and the animal upon reaching the place where the martyr's body was being watched instantly laydown. It was night; the soldiers, who had

[1] *Istor. eccl.* l. 9, n. 21.

retired to eat their supper in a little hut, invited the priest to join them, and Fronto gladly complied, giving them in return some wine. The guard, having drunk freely fell into a sound sleep, while Fronto, adoring ihe wondrous ways of divine Providence, took the body of Theodotus, and, replacing his ring, laid it upon the ass. The animal being let loose, went back to Malus, where a church was subsequently built in honor of St. Theodotus. His martyrdom took place in the beginning of the persecution under Diocletian, in the year 303.

Cardinal Orsi says that his acts were written by one Nilus, his most intimate friend, and an eye-witness of the facts herein recorded.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST TRYPHO AND ST. RESP1CIUS.

November 10.

These two holy martyrs, Trypho and Respicius, were natives of Bithynia, and having been educated from their infancy in the Christian faith, were young men of exemplary virtue. Aquilinus, the governor of the province, being informed that they were Christians, ordered them to be arrested, upon which they returned thanks to God, who made them worthy to suffer for his sake, beseeching him at the same time to accept their sacrifice, and grant them strength to persevere to the death. After their arrest they were conducted to Nice and imprisoned. Aquilinus, having summoned them to his presence, inquired of what condition they were, and what was their fortune. The youths replied: "Christians know not what fortune is, since they believe that it

is God who regulates all things according to his infinite wisdom." The officers who accompanied the governor said to them: "All of your religion are to be burned alive unless they sacrifice to our gods. Such is the imperial command." The holy prisoners answered: "We are not afraid to suffer for our religion; on the contrary, we desire it."

The governor here interposed, saying: "Ye are now old enough to know what ye ought to do." "Yes," answered Trypho, "and it is because we are well aware of it that we follow Jesus Christ. All that we desire is, to arrive at the perfection of this knowledge; and we think, moreover, that the surest road is that which we have just commenced to tread." The judge, seeing their constancy, ordered them to be tortured; but they hearing the command, forthwith stripped themselves and were placed upon the rack, which torture they endured with the most astonishing fortitude and tranquillity. During the torments they did not even open their mouths, except to invoke the adorable name of Jesus, or to give Aquilinus to understand the eternal damnation to which he exposed himself by following the worship of idols. But the governor despised all their exhortations, and gave orders that as he was going to hunt, the martyrs should be exposed in the fields to the severity of the frost until his return. The order was executed, and by reason of the excessive cold the martyrs' legs were burst in many places.

After his return from the chase the tvrant asked them whether they would not now learn to be wise. "This, indeed," said Trypho, " is what we are anxious to learn, through the homage we render to our God." Hereupon the governor sent them to prison; and having made an excursion to some other cities, returned to Nice, where he again summoned the martyrs before him. Speaking 'n a kind manner, he promised them riches and honors

if they would obey the imperial edicts; but finding them still constant, he said: "Have pity upon your youth; despise not the favors which you may obtain from us." Trypho answered: "We cannot better follow your advice than by remaining steadfast in our confession of Jesus Christ."

Aquilinus, enraged at their firmness, caused them to be dragged through the streets of the city, and to be scourged until the executioners became exhausted. He, moreover, ordered their sides to be torn with iron hooks, and their lacerated flesh to be burned with torches; during which butchery the martyrs said: "O Jesus our God, for whom we thus combat and suffer, permit not that the devil overcome us. Hear Thou our prayers, and grant that we may happily arrive at the consummation of our course." Thus did the saints continue to speak to Jesus Christ without heeding the tyrant, who during their tortures ceased not to importune them to sacrifice to the gods. Seeing, however, that all his efforts were unavailing, he condemned them to lose their heads. They suffered about the year 251.

Their Acts are found in Ruinart.[1]

[1] Such are in substance the Acts that Ruinart admits to be true in his second edition *(Amstelcedanii,* 1713). We must, however, observe that according to other authorities, confirmed by the Roman Breviary, St. Respicius was a tribune who, at the sight of the superhuman courage shown by St. Trypho while he was tortured, opened his eyes to the faith, at once declared himself a Christian, and was united to the glorious martyr. Their relics have been transported to Rome and deposited in the Church of the Holy Ghost.—Ed.

CHAPTER XV.

ST. ROMANUS, DEACON, AND ST. BARULAS, THE INFANT MARTYR.

November 18.

The martyrdom of St. Romanus is truly wonderful, and is celebrated by oriental writers, as well as by those of the Western Church. Eusebius, St. John Chrysostom, and Prudentius are, according to Cardinal Orsi,[1] amongst his panegyrists. St. Romanns was a Syrian, and descended of noble and Christian parents. At a very tender age he applied himself to study, in which his natural abilities enabled him to make great progress; but still greater was the advancement which he attained in the science of the saints, by the sanctity of his morals and his zeal for religion.

When the persecution of Diocletian began, he was already a deacon of the Church of Cæsarea, and went from house to house exhorting the Christians to endure with becoming fortitude whatever trials that great tribulation might bring upon them. His bishop, having sent him to Antioch on some very urgent business in the year 303, he found that the Christian churches were being pulled down in obedience to the imperial edict. Much as this afflicted the saint, bis grief was much more poignant at beholding the fall of many Christians who, terrified by the threats of the judges, presented themselves to offer sacrifice; whereupon the saint, inflamed by holy zeal, and regardless of his own danger, entered the crowd of apostates and exclaimed: "Alas, brethren, what is it ye do? Do ye abandon the true God, your

[1] *Istor. eccl.* l. 9, n. 20.

Creator and Redeemer, to sell yourselves to the devil, your enemy? Do you offer incense to gods of bronze, of stone, and of wood, and do you adore as gods those who during life have been the most abandoned of men ?" By such discourse he not only withheld those who were about to fall, and confirmed the constant, but he gave courage to the pusillanimous, and disposed them to brave all the persecutions of their enemies.

Cardinal Orsi, on the authority of Prudentius, relates that the prefect of the praetorium, Asclepiades, having sent some soldiers to a church to offer, upon the consecrated altar, victims to the idols, and afterwards to level the church with the earth, the saint opposed the sacrilegious attempt, saying that, if they wished to slay a victim, he was ready to offer to God the sacrifice of his life. Asclepiades having heard this, ordered Romanus to be arrested. The saint was advised to seek safety in flight, but refused to do so, and surrendered himself to the soldiers; he confessed at the tribunal that he was a Christian, and that he had dissuaded the faithful from obeying the edict, which he termed impious. " I clearly foresee," continued the holy deacon, " that this my confession will subject me to torments, but I hope to suffer them with constancy for the love of my God, since I have committed no crime."

The prefect commanded that he should be stretched upon the rack and torn with irons; but having been informed that the saint was a nobleman, he changed the punishment, and had him beaten with scourges armed with lead. "We shall see," said the prefect, " whether thou wilt speak with so much insolence during thy tortures." The holy martyr replied : " God would not be pleased were I insolent; but by the grace of Jesus Christ I shall remain faithful, nor will I cease, while I have life, to publish his praises and to detest your su-

perstitions." Meanwhile Romanus suffered the torture not only with patience but with joy, which caused Asclepiades to burn with rage. In order to oblige the saint to be silent, he would sometimes by gestures encourage the executioners, and at other times, in transports of anger, rise from his seat in order to intimidate the martyr. He then commenced to speak in praise of his gods, to whom, he said, Rome was indebted for her acquisition of empire, and added, that it was his duty to implore of them prosperity for the emperor, and to take a bloody vengeance on those that rebel against their authority. Romanus answered that he could not invent a better prayer for the princes and the soldiers than that they should all embrace the faith of Jesus Christ; adding, that he would never obey the emperor in his persecution of the Christians.

Asclepiades became infuriated beyond measure at these last words, and ordered that the martyr should be stretched upon the rack, and his sides and breast torn with iron hooks, until the bones and bowels should appear. But because the saint continued to despise these tortures, and encouraged the bystanders to be regardless of all temporal punishments, the prefect commanded that his mouth and cheeks should be torn with the same irons. But the saint thanked him, saying, that he had thus opened more mouths to celebrate the praises of Christ. Whereupon the judge threatened to burn him alive for his obstinacy in preferring to the ancient religion the novel doctrines of a crucified man. Herefrom Romanus took occasion to celebrate the glories of the Cross, explaining the holy mysteries which it indicated, and concluded by saying, that as Asclepiades did not understand these mysteries, he would give him an irrefragable proof of them. "Let there be brought," said the saint, "a child of tender years, and let us learn from him whether it be better to follow a religion which

teaches a plurality of gods, or that which adores only one.”

The prefect accepted the challenge, and the young child, who had not been long weaned, was brought forward, to whom Romanns said : “Which is better, my child, to adore Jesus Christ ora plurality of gods?” The boy replied that the true God could be only one, and that a plurality of gods was inconceivable. The tyrant, confused by this answer, turned to the child and said : “Who has taught thee these things?” He replied: “My mother, who was herself taught by God.”[1] Asclepiades had the cruelty to have the child lorn by force from his mother's embrace, scourged, and beheaded. The Church celebrates the triumph of this infant martyr, named Barulas, who was baptized in his own blood on the 18th November. The good mother, who was a Christian, having heard the sentence pronounced against her child, carried him herself to the place of execution, and without shedding a tear, kissed him and gave him to the executioner, telling him to remember her in heaven; she then held out her garment to receive his head, which she brought home as a precious relic.

The inhuman Asclepiades, instead of being moved at this miracle, which astonished all the bystanders, became more infuriated and cruel: he caused St. Romanus, whom he called “ the author of so many evils,” to be again put to the torture, and the fragments of

[1] A wonderful profession of faith, evidently inspired by Him who said : “You shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles [of my divinity and of the truth of my doctrine]. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak ; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you” (Matt. x. 18). The Holy Church is our mother according to faith, and it is God who has revealed to her the truths that she teaches us.—Ed.

flesh which still remained on his body to be pulled off; but the saint mocked the weakness of his executioners, saying, that they did not know how to deprive him of lite. The prefect having heard this, said: "Since thou art so desirous of ending thy life, thou shalt soon be satisfied ; fire shall quickly consume thee to ashes." While the executioners were leading him forward, he said to the judge: " Perfidious man! I appeal to my Saviour Jesus Christ from this thy cruel sentence." The saint said this to give the tyrant to understand that he should one day render an account to the Supreme Judge; but Asclepiades, notwithstanding, dictated the final sentence, condemning the martyr to the flames.

Meanwhile the funeral pile on which he was about to be burned was prepared, and while the executioners were tying the saint to the stake he told them that he knew that this sort of martyrdom was not destined for him, and that another miracle would astonish them. Even so it happened, for on a sudden it rained in such torrents that the executioners were unable to fire the pile, though it was covered with oil and pitch. This caused so great a murmur among the people, that a report of the fact was sent to the emperor; and while they were awaiting his decision the saint mocked his executioners, saying, "Where is now your fire?"

The emperor was inclined to release a man so evidently protected by Heaven, yet Asclepiades not only dissuaded him, but even obtained an order that Romanus should lose that tongue with which he had so blasphemed their gods. Having, therefore, proceeded to the forum and summoned Romanus, he ordered a surgeon called Aristones to pull out his tongue, which was easily executed, as the saint presented it in such a manner as enabled him to take it out by the root: a torrent of blood followed, which covered his beard and breast. It was a new miracle that Romanus could survive these

barbarous torments; but it was a still greater prodigy that the saint continued to speak. Eusebius writes[1] that in his time there were many persons yet alive who had witnessed this miracle.

Asclepiades, not content with what he had already done, made another attempt upon the constancy of the saint, and caused an altar, with fire, incense, and the flesh of animals, to be prepared. He then brought Romanus forward, exhorted him to sacrifice, and concluded by saying in derision: "I now give thee leave to speak." But the saint, raising his voice, replied that he should not be surprised if words were never wanting to those who preached Jesus Christ, to whom the laws of nature are subject, and who consequently enabled him to speak without a tongue. The tyrant, not knowing what to say to this new prodigy, declared his suspicions that he had been deceived by the surgeon, who instantly demanded an examination; whereupon the mouth of the saint was found without a tongue! This miracle was further tested by an experiment tried upon a criminal who had been condemned to death. His tongue was cut out, and he instantly expired.

St. Romanus was brought back to prison and detained there for some months, during which time he ceased not to preach the glories of Jesus Christ with even greater energy and clearness than he had before been master of. Upon the celebration of Diocletian's birthday all the prisoners were set at liberty except Romanus, who was kept in prison, with his legs stretched in the stocks, as far as the fifth hole, and was finally strangled upon the 17th November, in the year 303. He thus went to heaven to receive the reward for all his sufferings. St. John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church have celebrated his martyrdom in great eulogies.

[1] *De fivsiirr.* 1. 2.

CHAPTER XVI.

ST. CRISPINA.

December 5.

St. Crispina was held in high veneration all through Africa, and is honored by St. Augustine in various parts of his works, in which he speaks of her martyrdom. She was a noble lady, very rich, and the mother of several children. When she found herself in danger of losing her children, her possessions, and her life, in the persecution which was then raging, instead of being intimidated, she was filled with a holy joy, not unworthy the Christian education which she had received from her most tender years. Being arrested in her native city of Thagara by order of the proconsul Anulinus, and brought before his tribunal, he inquired of her whether she was aware of the imperial edicts which commanded that all persons should sacrifice to the gods of the empire. She replied: "I have never sacrificed, nor will I sacrifice to any other than to one God, and to our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, who was born and suffered for us."

Anulinus then said: "Leave this thy superstition, and adore the gods."

"Every day," said Crispina, "I adore my God, and besides him I know of no others."

"I perceive now," said the judge, "that thou art obstinate, and dost contemn our gods: thou must be made to experience the rigor of the laws."

"I shall suffer most willingly," replied the saint, "whatever may be exacted as the testimony of my faith."

"I will give thee to read," said the proconsul, "the

£dict of the emperor, which it behooveth thee to observe."

The saint replied: "I observe the commands of my Lord Jesus Christ."

Anulinus: "But thou shalt lose thy head, unless thou wilt observe the commands of the emperor, as they are observed throughout Africa."

Crispina: "No one shall oblige me to sacrifice to demons: I sacrifice to the Lord only, who made heaven and earth."

Here the proconsul began to exhort her to obey the edicts and to avoid the terrible consequences of the emperor's wrath. The saint courageously replied: "I fear not the anger of men; all they can do is nothing: I fear only God who is in heaven; and I should be lost forever were I to offend him by sacrilege."

"Thou shalt not," said the proconsul, "be guilty of that crime by obeying the princes and adoring the gods of the Romans." But Crispina, raising her voice, exclaimed: "Wouldst thou then have me guilty of sacrilege before God, in order not to appear sacrilegious to the eyes of men? It never shall be! God alone is great and omnipotent, the Creator of all things; men are his creatures; what, therefore, can they do?"

Anulinus, seeing that the saint continued firm in the faith, after some other invectives and threats, ordered that her head should be shaved, as a token of degradation, adding, that if she continued obstinate he would condemn her to a most cruel death. The saint answered: "Icare not for the present life, and am only anxious for the life of my soul. I fear eternal torments only." "Instantly obey," exclaimed the proconsul, "or your head shall at once be struck off!" The saint meekly answered: "I shall return thanks to my God, for making me worthy of this blessed lot. God is with me, that I may not consent to thy suggestions."

Here Anulinus exclaimed: "Why do we any longer bear with this impious woman?" Then, having caused the process of her trial to be read over, pronounced the final sentence, that Crispina should lose her head, for obstinately refusing to sacrifice to the gods, in obedience to the edicts. Crispina, having heard the iniquitous sentence, calmly and with holy joy said: "I return thanks to Jesus Christ, and I bless the Lord who has vouchsafed thus to deliver me from the hands of men." She consummated her martyrdom on the 5th December, about the year 304.

St. Augustine frequently proposed in his sermons the example of this martyr. "See," says the holy Father, "how St. Crispina despised all things, and life itself, for the love of Jesus Christ. Rich and noble as she was, she might have lived somewhat longer in the enjoyment of earthly happiness: but she would not have obtained everlasting life. Wisely, therefore, did she prefer to live forever, than to prolong for a short while her temporal existence." [1]

CHAPTER XVII.

ST. DIONYSIA, ST. MAJORICUS, HER SON, AND OTHER HOLY MARTYRS OR CONFESSORS IN THE PERSECUTION RAISED IN AFRICA BY THE VANDALS.

December 6 and 16.

Towards the close of the fifth century a most cruel persecution was raised in Africa by Huneric, king of the Vandals, with the object of obliging the Catholics to follow the Arian heresy. This persecution is described by St. Victor, Bishop of Vita,[2] who witnessed it

[1] *In Ps.* clvii. [2] *De Persecut. Afr.* l. 5.

and suffered from it. The tyrant, in the year 485, sent emissaries throughout Africa, with orders to spare no one who remained constant in the profession of the Catholic faith; and in pursuance of these orders, jacks, gibbets, scourges, and torturing instruments were every-where in requisition throughout the provinces.

Among the many martyrs who, in this persecution, sacrificed their lives, Dionysia, a lady of the city of Vita, was conspicuous. The persecutors, seeing her more animated than the rest, were preparing to strip her. in order that she should be scourged with rods, when she said: "I am willing to suffer; torture me as much as you please, but spare my modesty." These words, however, irritated the barbarians still more: they exposed her naked in the public square, and rent her flesh with scourges so cruelly, that the blood ran in streams down her body. In the midst of these torments the saint exclaimed: "Ministers of Satan! all that you do to dishonor me shall hereafter redound to my greater glory." Meanwhile she animated others to martyrdom, and her example was the salvation of almost that entire citv.

The saint had an only son, named Majoricus, of very tender age, who trembled at the sight of her torments; but the pious mother, steadfastly looking at him, said: "Remember, O my son! that we have been baptized; let us not lose the unsullied robes of grace, that when the Lord cometh to judge us, he may not say, 'Cast them into outer darkness.' My child! it is the torment which never ends that we should fear, and the life which never terminates that we ought to sigh for." The child was so strengthened by these words, that he endured torments which terminated his life; when the mother, embracing the dead body, ceased not to return thanks to God for so great a mercy.

See chapters lxxi. and lxxv.

The executioners next commenced to exercise their cruelty upon Dativa, the sister of Dionysia; then upon Leontia, Æmilianus, Tertius, and Boniface, who were torn until their bowels appeared; and they expired during the torture.

St. Victor further relates the great torments to which a citizen of Suburbis, called Servus, was put. He was first scourged until his body was completely lacerated, and then hoisted high in air with ropes, and let fall with all his weight to the earth. After putting him many times to this torture, they dragged him along the streets, so that his flesh, being torn by the sharp stones, hung down in pieces upon his belly, sides, and back; but the holy martyr suffered all with joy, in testimony of his faith.

In the city of Cucusa also there were many who laid down their lives in the same cause; among whom a lady named Victoria deserves special mention. She was suspended in the air, while a fire was kindled beneath to roast her by slow degrees. While she was suffering this exquisite torture, her husband, who had renounced the faith, used all his endeavors to pervert her; and presenting his children, said to her: "Why, my wife, wilt thou suffer such torture? Have pity at least upon these children! Ah! do obey the commands of the king, and console these children and me." But the servant of the Lord closed her ears to these seducing words, and turned her eyes from her children, that she might raise her heart to God. The executioners seeing her shoulders broken and her arms dislocated by being so long suspended, thought her dead, and left her; but on being taken down she related that a virgin had appeared to her, and cured her by touching her limbs.

It is also recorded by St. Victor, that at Thipasa, in Mauritania,[1] many Catholics used to perform their de-

[1] Algiers.

votions in a private house, to avoid communicating with an Arian bishop who endeavored to pervert them ; but the impious Arian wrote of the matter to Huneric, who sent thither a command to amputate the right hands and cut out the tongues of all these pious persons. The barbarous order was executed ; but God enabled them all to speak, notwithstanding the loss of their tongues. St. Victor attests that these confessors of the faith were able to speak when he wrote, which was three or four years after the event; and there are other authors who confirm the fact. Æneas of Gaza, a philosopher of the Platonic school,[1] assures us that he himself saw the persons and heard them speak ; and that, to be the more certain, he caused them to open their mouths, and saw plainly that they wanted their tongues. Procopius, also a contemporaneous writer, in the history of the Vandal war[2] affirms that many persons so treated under Huneric were, notwithstanding, able to speak. He makes special mention of some at Constantinople, two of whom, having miserably fallen into a certain sin, lost this miraculous gift of speech. Also Count Marcellinus, in his chronicles, relates that Huneric ordered the tongue to be cut out from a certain Catholic who had an impediment in his speech, and that he afterwards spoke plainly, giving glory to God. This author cites other cases which took place at Constantinople. Finally, the Emperor Justinian, in publishing a certain law, declares that he himself had heard some of these persons speaking.'

This same holy bishop informs us, that among the martyrs of Africa there were many holy virgins who

1 *Theophrastus.*

2 *De Bello Vaud.* l. i. c. 8. *Anno* 484.

3 We may recall to mind a similar miracle related above, in the martyrdom of St. Romanus, page 104.—En.

had consecrated their purity to Jesus Christ; but the Arians, who, like the generality of heretics, are opposed to virginity, regarding with envy the edification given by these pious women, wrote calumnious letters to Huneric concerning their conduct with their spiritual directors, and obtained from that wicked king an order that they should be put to torture until they should confess those falsely alleged crimes. They were suspended in air with great weights at their feet, and burned with red-hot plates of iron. Many expired under these torments, and those who survived remained crippled and burn-marked for life. The martyrology mentions these saints on the 6th of December.

But God did not long delay the punishment of the wicked Huneric, who, as St. Victor relates, was eaten up alive by worms, and died, tearing his own flesh through despair.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SS. PHILEAS, BISHOP OF THMUIS, AND PHILOROMUS, TRIBUNE.

February 4.

Among the many martyrs of Egypt and Thebais, SS. Phileas and Philoromus attract particular attention, on account of their exalted rank and the high estimation in which, according to Eusebius, they were held in their own country. They shed together their blood for the faith, at Alexandria, between the years 306 and 312.

Phileas had discharged some of the first offices of state, in the city of Thmuis, in Egypt. He was a pagan by birth, was married, and had some children, who were still pagans when the saint laid down his life for Christ. He was somewhat advanced in life when he was converted, but the Lord filled him with such virtue.

that he deserved to be appointed bishop of his native place.[1] He was arrested during the persecution, and was conducted to prison in Alexandria.

We have a letter written by him to his flock, while he was in prison for the faith and about to consummate his martyrdom, which shows his holy zeal and pastoral solicitude. He there encourages the faithful to suffer every torture for Jesus Christ rather than renounce the faith ; adducing the examples of so many saintly heroes who, having the eyes of their souls fixed on God, went joyfully to encounter death, in the full confidence that he would comfort his servants in the trial which would enable them to obtain eternal life. He then exhorts them to confide in the merits of Jesus Christ, and to keep continually before their eyes his Passion and death, as well as the eternal rewards which he promises to those who will be constant in confessing him before men.

A short lime after the writing of this letter the martyrs were brought before Culcian, the governor of Egypt, who exhorted them to have pity upon themselves, their wives and children, who, together with many relatives and friends in Alexandria, had come to dissuade them ; but all their arts were incapable of shaking the constancy of the martyrs. Phileas, standing upon the platform and being told by the governor to enter into himself and be wise, answered : " I have never lost my judgment." Culcian : " Then sacrifice to the gods." Phileas : " I sacrifice to one only God, not to many."

[1] In the primitive times, in which the Church was composed only of converts, it was not unusual to see married men raised to the dignity of the priesthood and even to that of the episcopate ; but these were obliged to live in perpetual continence. The ministers of the altar are consecrated to God, and can no longer belong to any one except to him.—Ed.

"Thy conscience," said the governor, "should make thee sacrifice for the sake of thy wife and children." Phileas answered: "Conscience obliges me to prefer God to all things, since the Scripture saith that thou shalt love thy God, who created thee, above all things." "Which God?" said Culcian. The saint stretching out his hand to heaven, said: "That God who created heaven and earth, and endureth forever." Culcian asked him: "Was Christ God?" The saint replied: "Yes, truly, for he hath raised the dead to life, and worked many other miracles." "But how?" exclaimed the governor; "was a god then crucified?" "Yes," replied Phileas, "he was crucified for our salvation, for which he willingly suffered ignominy and death; all his sufferings had been foretold in the Holy Scriptures. If any be desirous of further information, let them come forward and they shall see the truth!"

The saint then told the governor that he was anxious for him to execute his orders. "Then," said Culcian, "thou art anxious to die without reason." "Not without reason," said Phileas, "but for God and for truth." "I would wish," said the governor, "to save thee for thy brother's sake."[1] But Phileas replied: "I beseech thee to execute that which hath been commanded thee." Culcian said: "If I knew thee to be poor, I would not desire to save thee; but thou art possessed of great wealth, and canst support many; sacrifice, therefore, and live." Phileas answered: "I will not sacrifice." Culcian: "Dost thou not see thy wife, how piteously she looks at thee?" Phileas: "Jesus Christ, whom I serve, is our Saviour; as he has called me, he can also call her to the inheritance of his glory."

The governor here offered him time to consider, but the holy bishop said: "I have given all these points suf-

[1] This brother, says Alban Butler, was one of the judges.—Ed.

ficient considei ation, and am determined to suffer for Chiist. Hcieupon his relatives cast themselves at his feet, and besought him to have compassion upon his wife and children; but the saint, raising his eyes to God, declared that he should not think of any other relatives than the saints in heaven.

Among the persons of distinction present at this spectacle was Philoromus, a military tribune, who held a very high office in the administration of justice. Having listened to the wailings of the bishop's relatives and the exhortations of the governor, raising his voice he exclaimed: "Why do you vainly endeavor to shake his constancy? Why do you fatigue yourselves uselessly with one whom you see faithful to his God? Do ye not perceive that your entreaties and your tears are of no avail? Tears shed from human motives cannot move the soul of a Christian who has God before his eyes." The entire multitude, enraged at these words of Philoromus, cried out that he should be condemned to the same death as Phileas; whereupon the governor commanded that they should be both beheaded.

As the entire crowd were proceeding, together with the martyrs, to the place of execution, the bishop's brother said with a loud voice that Phileas had demanded an appeal. Culcian instantly called them back, but Phileas said: "I have not demanded any appeal. Give no ear to this wretched man. I am much beholden to the judges who have made me a co-heir with Jesus Christ."

Having said this he moved forward to the place of execution, where, having arrived together with his companion, he raised his voice to the Christians and said: "My dear children, those of you that seek God in truth should be careful to abstain from sin, since the enemy goeth about seeking whom he may devour. As yet we have not suffered; we now commence to suffer, and to be

ti uly disciples of Jesus Christ. Be ye attentive in the observance oi his commandments, and continually invoke the Creator of all things, to whom be glory forever!" At the tei initiation of this exhortation both martyrs were beheaded. In this manner did these two heroes consummate their sacrifice.[1]

CHAPTER XIX.

ST. DIONYSIA, VIRGIN, WITH SS. ANDREW AND PAUL OF LAMPSACUS.

May 15.

It is recorded by Fleury,[2] that in the third century, at Lampsacus, a city in Lesser Asia, there were presented to Optimus, the proconsul, three Christians—Andrew. Paul, and Nichomacus. Being asked to what country they belonged, Nichomacus, first of all, raising his voice, answered: "I am a Christian." The proconsul having repeated the question to the other two, they also replied: "We likewise are Christians."

Optimus then, turning to Nichomacus, ordered him to sacrifice in obedience to the emperor; but he replied: " Thou art already aware that a Christian cannot sacrifice to demons." The proconsul had him tortured so cruelly that he was about to expire, when, his courage failing him, the wretched man exclaimed: "I am no longer a Christian; I will willingly sacrifice to the gods." He was quickly withdrawn from the torture, but was

[1] *Hist, eecles.* I. 6, n. 41.

[2] Their Acts are found in the collections of Ruinart.

[3] As for St. Peter, who suffered with them, see Chapter XLVI.

instantly possessed by a devil, and violently casting himself upon the earth, bit off his tongue and expired.

St. Dionysia, a young virgin only sixteen years of age, having witnessed this spectacle and being deeply penetrated by the misfortune of Nichomacus, exclaimed: "O miserable wretch ! by not having suffered a moment longer, thou hast condemned thyself to eternal pains The proconsul hearing these words caused her to be dragged from out the crowd and asked her if she were a Christian. " Yes," she replied, " I am a Christian, and therefore weep for that unhappy man, who, by suffering a little more, might have earned heaven for himself, whereas he will now weep for all eternity." The proconsul, enraged at these words, exclaimed: "Instantly thou shalt sacrifice to our gods, or thou shalt be ignominiously treated and afterwards burned alive." Dionysia answered: "My God is greater than thou, wherefore I fear not thy threats; he will grant me strength to suffer every torment for his love." Optimus then delivered her to two young libertines who brought her to a house; but there appeared a youth surrounded with a supernatural splendor who was ready to defend her from insult, whereupon the young men cast themselves at her feet and implored her intercession in their behalf.

On the following morning the proconsul summoned before him Andrew and Paul, who had been kept in prison, and called upon them to sacrifice to Diana. They both replied: " We know not Diana nor the other demons whom you adore; we worship the only God." At these words the crowd of idolaters called upon the proconsul to leave the execution of the two saints to themselves; and he accordingly delivered them up to be stoned by the multitude. The saints were tied and dragged by the feet through the streets to the place of execution.

While they were being stoned, Dionysia escaped from the guard and repairing to the place threw herself upon

the martyrs exclaiming: "To live with you in heaven, I will die with you upon earth." The proconsul upon hearing this ordered her head to be struck off; and this was accordingly done.

CHAPTER XX.

ST. FEBRONIA, VIRGIN.

June 25.

During the persecution of Diocletian there existed in the city of Sibapoli,[1] in Syria, a celebrated nunnery, containing upwards of fifty most exemplary religious. The Superior, named Briena, was a lady of noble birth and great virtue, and had with her a niece called Febronia, whom she had reared from her third to her nineteenth year. She was exceedingly beautiful, and still more adorned by the most exalted virtue; and the pious aunt was so careful of her that she would not allow her to be seen by anybody.

Febronia, almost from her infancy, had dedicated her virginity to Jesus Christ; and, having become a religious, led a life of the most perfect sanctity. She fasted almost the entire year, her food being only bread and roots, or lentils, and she sometimes passed two days without any nutriment at all. She slept mostly upon a narrow plank, and sometimes on the ground.

It was known that there was in the convent a young lady of extraordinary beauty and virtue, and many persons were most anxious to see her and speak with her. but in vain. A young widow, however, of very noble family, called Ieria, who was as yet a catechumen, casting herself at the feet of the Superior, with many tears

[1] Or Nisibis, at present Nezib in Mesopotamia.

sought, and finally obtained, an interview with Febronia; the conversation so inflamed her with the love of God. that she immediately received baptism, induced her family to do the same, and renouncing second nuptials, dedicated herself exclusively to the service of God.

Some time after, it was reported that the emperor Diocletian was about to send the prefect Lysimachus, accompanied by his uncle Selenus, to Sibapoli, with orders to exterminate the Christians. This news spread terror among the Christians; and the bishop, knowing the danger in which the nuns would be placed, gave them leave to depart from the convent, which they could not do without shedding many tears. The Superior, however, determined to await her crown in the convent; and turning to her niece, she wept and said "What will become of thee, Febronia?" The young virgin replied : " I shall stay here, my dear aunt; what better lot could await me than to shed my blood for Jesus Christ !"

The prefect Lysimachus was inclined to show favor to the Christians, on account of his mother, who was a true believer. Hence Diocletian associated with him in the proconsulate of the East his uncle Selenus, who was a mortal enemy of the Christians, and gave the command of the troops to Primus, with directions to obey the orders of Selenus. The edicts of extermination we e first executed in Palmyra, to a horrible extent, the number of slaughtered Christians being innumerable.

The pagans called the attention of Selenus to the nunnery of Sebapoli, whither a company of soldiers was forthwith despatched. Upon breaking open the gates they were met by Febronia, who casting herself at their feet, implored them to make her the first victim; but the general, Primus, struck with her appearance, went to Lysimachus, who was only twenty years of age, and informed him that he had found in the convent a ladv of rare beauty, and apparently of noble family, whom he

could recommend to him for a wife. Meanwhile one of the guard went to inform Selenus that Primus was endeavoring to have his nephew married to a Christian virgin, whereupon the uncle ordered that Febronia should be brought before him. The young lady was accordingly laden with chains; some of the religious wished to accompany her, but the soldiers refused, when the pious aunt, taking leave of her, said: "Go, my child, and show thyself a worthy spouse of Jesus Christ!"

When Febronia was brought before Selenus, he asked her whether she was free. "No," she replied, "I am a servant." Selenus: "Who is thy master?" Febronia: "Jesus Christ my Saviour and my God." Hereupon, Selenus began to represent to her the misfortune of having been deceived by the Christian sect, and besought her to awake from the delusion, and sacrifice to the gods, who would prosper her; since she would thus contract nuptials with his nephew, Lysimachus, and become one of the most distinguished ladies of the empire. The saint, raising up her chains, said: "i beseech thee not to deprive me of the most precious gems that I have ever worn. As regards the nuptials, I am consecrated to God, and cannot accept the sons of earth.—Then I am a Christian, and how can I worship devils? Know that for my faith I am willing to suffer all torments."

Selenus, infuriated by this speech, ordered the saint to be scourged, which torture was so cruelly inflicted that her body might be said to be one wound; nevertheless, Febronia ceased not to bless the Lord. Selenus, thinking that her prayers were intended to insult him, ordered her to be roasted on a gridiron over a slow fire, at which horrid spectacle even the pagans turned away, while the saint continued to thank Jesus Christ, who thus made her worthy to suffer for his sake. The tyrant, not content with what she had as yet endured, caused her teeth to be knocked out, and her breasts to be torn

off; but seeing that all these tortures could not shake the constancy of Febronia, he ordered her head to be struck off; this completed her martyrdom, on the 25th of June, about the beginning of the fourth century.

While Primus and Lysimachus were con versing about the heroic conduct of the youthful virgin, news was brought them that Selenus, having been seized by a sudden madness, had dashed out his brains. They proceeded to his apartments and found him dead, whereupon Lysimachus ordered Primus to have the body of St. Febronia laid in a rich coffin, and honorably buried. This act of piety performed, Primus and Lysimachus embraced the Christian faith, and their example was followed by many others.[1]

CHAPTER XXI.

ST. ARCADIUS.

January 12.

St. Arcadius was a native of Africa, and most probably suffered in Cæsarea,[2] the capital of Mauritania. A furious persecution—during which the Christians were

[1] This history is related more at length by Father Marin (*Vics des Pires*, l. ix. ch. i) after the Bollandists. He adds several interesting circumstances. God glorified St. Febronia after her death by many miracles. Lysimachus and Primus were not only converted, but renounced all worldly prospects and embraced the religious life. Moreover. leria threw herself at the feet of the venerable Briena, and begged her to receive her into her community that she might occupy the place of Febronia; she also wished that her jewels should serve to adorn the coffin of the glorious martyr.—Ed.

[2] At present Cherchell, a small village in the province of Mascara, in Algiers. The time in which St. Arcadius suffered is uncertain; according to Alban Butler it was probably in the thin! century.—Ed.

cruelly dragged before the idols to sacrifice—was raging, when Arcadius withdrew to a solitary place, where he employed his time in fasting and in prayer. Meanwhile, as he appeared not at the public sacrifices, soldiers were despatched to surprise him in his house, but not finding him, they arrested one of his relatives, in order to make him discover the retreat of his kinsman.

Arcadius was unwilling that another should suffer on his account, and presented himself to the governor, saying that his relative might be discharged, as he had come to answer for himself. The governor replied that he also might depart unhurt if he would sacrifice to the gods. The saint courageously answered: "Thou art deceived if thou believest that threats of death can affright the servants of God. They say with St. Paul, 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain' [Philipp, i. 21]. Invent, therefore, what tortures thou canst, we shall never be separated from our God."

Hereupon the tyrant, full of wrath, and thinking the usual tortures too light for Arcadius, ordered that joint by joint should be chopped off the saint's body, beginning with his toes. The barbarous butchery was instantly executed, during which the holy martyr ceased not to bless the Lord. After his body had been reduced to a mere trunk, calmly surveying his mangled limbs scattered around him, he exclaimed: "Oh, happy members that have served to manifest the glory of God! now that I behold you separated from my body, you are dearer to me than ever. I now know that I belong to Jesus Christ, as I have always desired."

Then turning to those present, who were idolaters, he said: Know ye that all these sufferings are easily overcome by those who continually keep before ti eves the eternal life that God bestows upon his servants. Adore the true God, who consoles me in these tortures; and abandon the worship of your false gods, who cannot

assist you in your need. He who dies for the true God acquires life everlasting. Behold, for having suffered these torments, I go to live with him eternally, without the fear of ever losing him." Having finished his discourse, he placidly gave his soul to his Redeemer, on the 12th of January.

This martyrdom filled the idolaters with confusion, and inspired the Christians with a great desire of laying down their lives for Jesus Christ. They afterwards collected the scattered limbs of the martyr, and gave them honorable burial.

CHAPTER XXII.

ST. JUSTIN, THE PHILOSOPHER.

April 13, and among the Greeks, June 1 or 12.

St. Justin was one of those glorious saints that have illustrated the Church of Christ by their extraordinary learning, as well as by their eminent virtues. He wrote in defence of Catholic truth against pagans, Jews, and heretics, and presented to the emperors and Roman senate two famous "Apologies," wherein he vindicates the innocence of the Christians, and proves that the crimes imputed to them were mere calumnies of the pagans. By the sanctity of his life, and the zeal and energy of his preaching, he converted many infidels, and finally terminated his brilliant career by a glorious martyrdom.

St. Justin was born about the beginning of the second century at Neapolis,[1] the capital of Samaria, of Greek

[1] The ancient Sichem, now called Naplous.—It is in reference to the place of his birth, and not in allusion to his religious principles, that St. Epiphanius calls our saint a Samaritan, for St. Justin himself declares that he had been a Gentile previously to his conversion.

parents, who were idolaters. Having gone through the usual elementary course of studies, he found himself inspired with a great desire to know something concerning the Great Cause, or Creator of all. Having in vain sought for truth among the Stoics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans, and those of the Platonic school, God was pleased to satisfy his yearnings after a wonderful manner. Having wandered one day into a solitary place in order that he might with more quietude enjoy his meditations, he met with an old man of very venerable appearance, who told him that if he wished to arrive at the knowledge of the true God, he should leave the study of philosophy, and begin to read the Prophets, who in their writings had manifested to man the mysteries of God, and announced Jesus Christ his Son, through whom alone we can arrive at the knowledge of the true God. "But," continued this venerable personage, "above all things, pray to the Lord to illuminate thy mind; because these things are not to be understood except by those unto whom God hath given the knowledge of them." Having pronounced these words, he disappeared.

After this interview, Justin applied himself continually to the reading of the Holv Scriptures, from which he derived that blessed knowledge which made him embrace the faith and receive the sacrament of regeneration about the year 133, being then about thirty years of age. The constancy and fortitude of the martyrs, in suffering tortures, and laying down their lives for Jesus Christ, as he himself confesses, contributed much to his conversion, from which time he dedicated himself entirely to the love of Jesus Christ, and the advancement of his religion. To this end he received the holy order of priesthood,[1] and exerted himself -continually in the

[1] The clerical character of St. Justin is by no means an uncontroverted point. The silence of the ancient authors with regard to his or-

conversion of infidels and heretics, as considering himself called by God to the defence of his Church. Hence he used to say: "Since I have obtained from God the grace to understand the Scriptures, I labor to make them understood by others also, lest my neglect should be punished at the tribunal of God." zXnd again: "lam determined to manifest the truth, although I should be cut to pieces."

Having proceeded to Rome, he instructed many in the doctrines of the Christian faith; and there about the year 150 composed and presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and to the Roman senate, his first "Apology," wherein he demonstrates the truth of the doctrines, and the sanctity of life, which the Christians professed. He adds, that many of them had lived in a state of inviolate purity for sixty or seventy years; and that Christians are so enamoured of this angelic virtue, that they either live in perpetual continency, or embrace the married state for the holy purpose of training children in the love and service of God; their desires being placed in the joys of eternal life, which they expect through the death of Jesus Christ.

In testimony of the truth of the Christian faith,he brings forward the fulfilment of the prophecies, which had been preserved by the Jews, the avowed enemies of the Christians. "We have seen," says the saint, "those propbe-

dination has induced some to consider him a layman, as they think that so important a circumstance, had it taken place, could not have l>een omitted by early writers. Yet this, after all, is but a negative argument; and the other opinion, although founded only upon inference, seems more probable. His preaching, teaching, catechizing, etc., would proclaim him a deacon, at least; and it is hard to believe that if such a person at all entered the clerical state the Church would have failed to promote him to the priesthood. The circumstantial evidence in favor of his ordination has been sufficient to convince Tillemont and others.—Ed.

cies fulfilled in our own days, by the birth of Jesus Christ from a virgin; by his preaching and miracles; by his Passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven; by the reprobation of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem; by the conversion of the Gentiles, and the establishment of the Church throughout the entire world! These prophecies, so perfectly fulfilled, must convince us that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, who shall come one day to judge mankind, as hath been foretold, and as we believe."

The Church in those days kept concealed from the uninitiated the celebration of the most holy mysteries; but St. Justin thought it necessary to explain them, in order to contradict the infamous calumnies of secret lewdness and infanticide, which were being circulated against the Christians. Wherefore having explained the sacred ceremonies of baptism, he proceeds to speak of the Eucharist in the following terms: "He that presides in the assembly is presented with bread and a chalice of wine, with water; whereupon, in the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, he renders glory to the Father. And by these gifts doth he make thanksgiving, which all the faithful confirm by the word 'Amen.' The prayers, praises, and thanksgiving being terminated, the deacons take of the bread and the wine, mixed with water, over which all these holy prayers have been recited, and having distributed them among those present, they carry some to the absent also.[1] This food is by us called

[1] The deacons of the ancient Church frequently carried the Eucharist to the Christians who were in prison for the faith, or otherwise unavoidably absent; and sometimes even administered it in the assemblies of the faithful, as these words of St. Justin are frequently cited to prove. They did not, however, discharge this duty by virtue of their office, but merely by the delegated power given them by their Superiors. The circumstances of the Church, during the persecutions, rendered this discipline necessary, and an instance is recorded by Eusebius (*Lib.* 6,

Eucharist; of which no one can partake who believeth not our doctrines, and who hath not been cleansed from sin in the laver of regeneration. This is not common food ordrink; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour was, for our redemption, by virtue of the divine word, composed of flesh and blood; so we are aware that, by virtue of the prayer containing his divine words, the food by which we are nourished is the flesh and blood of the Word Incarnate." Thus we see that the present doctrine of the Catholic Church is that which was believed and practised in the apostolic times, in which our saint flourished.

St. Justin proceeds to describe the meetings of the faithful: "Upon the first day of the week, a general meeting lakes place, when, as time permits, the prophe cies, and writings of the apostles, are read. The reading being terminated by the Lector, he who presides makes an exhortation, to excite the people to the imitation of worthy actions. We then all rise, and place ourselves in prayer, which being finished, bread and wine with water are prepared, over which the bishop or priest recites the prayers and thanksgiving, the people answer *Amen;* and, finally, the distribution of the holy gifts is made by the deacons. The richer sort make a liberal collection, which by the president is distributed to widows and orphans, to the sick and those in prison, to pilgrims or other persons in need. The reason why we meet on Sunday is, because it was the day upon which God began the creation of the world; and upon which Jesus Christ arose from the dead."

It is believed that, although this "Apology" of St. Justin did not cause the persecution to cease, it made a

Histor. cap. xxxvi.) of even a layman having been sent with the Viaticum to a dying person. Vasquez *(Disp.* 219, *cap.* 1) shows that this practice was not contrary to the divine institution of the Eucharist.—Ed.

favorable impression on the Emperor Antoninus Pius, as is inferred from his letter, written to the cities of Asia Minor, in favor of the Christians, and recorded by Eusebius.

Our saint composed other works in defence of Catholic doctrine, against the Marcionites and Valentinians;[1] and also his Dialogue with Trypho/ against the pertinacity of the Jews. Marcus Aurelius having succeeded Antoninus Pius in the empire, the persecution was renewed; and one Crescens, who, although styling himself a Cynic philosopher, was in reality a very shallow fellow, look occasion to exclaim loudly against the Christians. St. Justin, in public dispute, frequently convicted him of the most violent malice, and the greatest possible ignorance of the doctrine and practices of the Christians, and was induced to publish, and present to the emperor, his second "Apology," in which he defends his religion against the calumnies of Crescens and others.

[1] The followers of Marcion and Valentinus.—Marcion, having been excommunicated for a crime of incontinency, committed under very aggravating circumstances, professed himself a Stoic philosopher, turned heresiarch, and taught the existence of two gods, or first principles. Valentinus fell away from the faith, as Tertullian *{Lib. cont. Valent, cap.* 4) relates, in consequence of his pride and jealousy, because another person was preferred to him, in the election of a bishop. The errors of this heresiarch were most ridiculous: he taught the existence of an eternal and invisible God, called Bathos, who, being married to a divinity styled Ennoia, produced thirty inferior deities, whom he denominated Æônes. Pope St. Anicetus was most vigilant in protecting the faithful from the artifices of these heretics, and their errors were ably refuted by St. Irenæus, Tertullian, and others.—En.

[2] A learned Jew who, being obliged to fly from his country, retired to Greece and spent a considerable time in the study of philosophy, principally at Corinth. He introduced himself to St. Justin, who continued to wear the philosopher's cloak after his conversion, on one of the public walks, and spoke of the excellence of philosophy. This conversation, which forms the substance of the book referred to in the text, is given at some length by Fleury.—*Hist. Ecc. tom.* 1, *livre* 3, *num.* iii

In showing that Christians had been unjustly put to death, he relates that a married couple had both been guilty of incontinency; the woman, having been converted to the Christian religion, used all her endeavors to withdraw her husband from his shameful practices; but he, instead of amending, accused her and one Ptolemy, who had been the means of her conversion, of being Christians. The prefect, Urbicus, sentenced them to death; whereupon a certain Christian, named Lucius, exclaimed: "With what conscience, O Urbicus! dost thou condemn a man who hath been guilty of no crime?" Lucius, together with another Christian, received a similar sentence.

A very short time after the publication of this discourse St. Justin was apprehended, together with six other Christians of his acquaintance,[1] and brought before Rusticus, the Prefect of Rome, who exhorted him to obey the imperial edicts. The saint replied: "No one can be reproved or condemned for obeying the precepts of our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The prefect asked him what kind of learning he professed. Justin answered that he had learned the doctrines of various sects, and had finally embraced Christianity, although it was despised by those who were led away by errors and false opinions. "Unhappy wretch!" exclaimed the prefect, "dost thou then delight in this discipline?" Justin: "Yes, because it teaches me the true doctrine." Rusticus: "Which is this doctrine?" Justin: "The true doctrine which we profess is, to believe in one only God, the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and to confess Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the foretold by the Prophets, the preacher of salvation unto men, and the Mastdr of those who happily observe the divine precepts. But neither have I a

[1] These were Chariton, Evelpiste, Hierax, Peon, Liberianus, and a woman named Charitana.—En.

tongue to express nor a mind to conceive anything worthy of his infinite dignity;—to do so, I would need the mind and the spirit of the prophets, who, inspired by God, foretold his coming."

The prefect asked him where the Christians were in the habit of assembling. Justin replied: "Where they please, and where they can. Dost thou imagine, perchance, that we all assemble in the same place? The God of the Christians is not confined to a place; he is invisible, and fills both heaven and earth; and is everywhere adored and praised by the faithful." "But I wish to know," rejoined Rusticus, "where thou and thy disciples assemble." The saint answered: "As for myself, I dwell at the Timothean baths: this is the second time I have come to Rome, and I am scarcely acquainted with any other place in the city; if any one should wish to seek me, I am ready to communicate to him the doctrines of truth." Rusticus: "Thou art then a Christian?" Justin: "So it is: I am a Christian."

The prefect then turned to St. Justin's companions, and interrogated them, one after the other, concerning their faith. They all confessed themselves Christians, and manifested a desire to die for Jesus Christ. Rusticus then said to Justin: "Tell me, thou who dost believe that thou hast the true wisdom, whether thou art persuaded that thou shalt ascend into heaven, after I shall have caused thee to be scourged and beheaded." The saint replied: "If I shall suffer these punishments, I hope to receive the reward which is prepared for those who observe the commandments of Christ." The prefect asked: "Dost thou, then, really imagine that thou shalt ascend into heaven;" "This I do not only imagine, but I know it," replied the saint, "and am so fully assured of it, that I entertain no doubt whatever."

Finally, the prefect, turning to all those confessors of Jesus Christ, said to them: "Go ye together, and unani-

mously sacrifice to the gods." Justin, answering for all, replied: "No man in his senses could abandon religion to become a participator in impiety." The prefect hereupon threatened that their non-compliance would be followed by the most unrelenting tortures. Justin said: "There is nothing which we more earnestly desire than to endure torments for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus attain unto salvation; for this it is that will enable us to present ourselves with confidence at the tribunal of that Judge before whom all the world must necessarily appear." To this the other martyrs assented, adding: "Do quickly what thou art about. We are Christians, and will never sacrifice to idols."

The prefect then pronounced against them the following sentence: " Those who have not wished to sacrifice to the gods, nor obey the edict of the emperor, shall first be scourged, and afterwards beheaded, in pursuance of the law." The martyrs were forthwith led to the place of execution, where the sentence being carried into effect, they received the glorious crown of martyrdom, in the year 167, or the following. Their bodies were privately carried away by the Christians, who gave them honorable interment.

The Acts of these martyrs are found in Ruinart and Tillemont

CHAPTER XXIII.

ST. AGATHA, VIRGIN.

February 5.

This holy virgin and martyr is held in great veneration by the Greek as well as the Latin Church; and although her original Acts have not been preserved, many

well-authenticated facts concerning her martyrdom are found in the Bollandists, Surius, and others. She was a native of Sicily, and descended of a noble and opulent family. These circumstances, added to her extraordinary beauty, inflamed Quintianus, a man of consular dignity, with such love of her, that be resolved to compel her to become his wife. The edicts of the emperor Decius against the Christians having been published, he ordered Agatha to be arrested as a Christian, and conducted to Catania, where he then resided.

The holy virgin having heard the proclamation against the Christians, retired to a solitary place in order to avoid the snares of Quintianus, concerning which she had received some intimation. The emissaries of the governor, however, discovered her place of concealment, and after having been arrested, she prayed after the following manner: "O Jesus Christ, Lord of all things, Thou seest my heart, and knowest my desire, which is to possess only Thee, since I have consecrated myself entirely to Thee. Preserve me, dear Lord, from this tyrant, and enable me to overcome the dev l, who layeth snares for my soul."

When the saint appeared before Quintianus, in order the more easily to overcome her modesty, he gave her up to Aphrodisia, an abominable woman, who, together with her daughters, publicly professed immodesty. In her infamous house the saint suffered greater torture than the darkest and most fetid dungeon could afford. AH the arts of Aphrodisia and her partners in crime were unceasingly applied, in order to induce the saint to comply with the wishes of Quintianus: but Agatha, who from her infancy had been consecrated to Jesus Christ, was enabled by his divine grace to overcome all their attempts.

Quintianus, having been informed that the efforts of Aphrodisia for an entire month had been employed in

vain, commanded that the saint should be again brought before him. He upbraided her, that, being a free woman and noble, she had allowed herself to be seduced into the humble servitude of the Christians. The holy virgin courageously confessed that she was a Christian, and that she knew of no nobility more illustrious, nor liberty more real, than to be a servant of Jesus Christ. In order to give the governor to understand how infamous were the deities which he adored and desired her to worship, she asked whether he would wish that his wife should be a prostitute, like Venus, or that he himself should be considered an incestuous adulterer like Jupiter. Quintianus, irritated at her rebuke, commanded her to be buffeted and led to prison. The following day she was again summoned, and asked whether she had resolved to save her life. She replied: "God is my lifg and my salvation." The governor then put her to the torture; but perceiving how little it affected her, he commanded her breasts to be lacerated, and afterwards cut ôff, which was executed with barbarous cruelty.

Quintianus then remanded the saint to prison, commanding that her wounds should be left undressed, in order that she might expire under the torture. But at midnight St. Peter appeared to her in a vision, perfectly cured her wounds, and freed her from all pain: during the entire of that night there appeared in the interior of the prison so resplendent a light that the guards fled in terror, leaving the door of her dungeon open, so that she could have escaped, as the other prisoners advised her, but that she was unwilling, as she said, to lose by flight the crown which was being prepared for her in heaven.

Quintianus, nothing moved by her miraculous cure, but on the contrary more irritated, after four days devised new torments for the saint. He commanded tha' she should be rolled over broken tiles, mixed with burning coals; but she endured all with constancy; and whih

the tyrant was planning fresh torments, the saint, perceiving that her life was drawing to a close, made the following prayer: "O Lord, my Creator, who hast preserved me from my infancy, hast given me strength to oveicome these torments, and hast taken from me the love of the world, receive now my soul. It is time that I should at last pass from this miserable life to the fruition of Thy glory." Just as she had finished these words, she tranquilly expired, and went to be united to God, to praise him and love him forever. This happened in 251. Her name is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE; ST. TYGRIUS, PRIEST; AND ST. EUTROPIUS, LECTOR.

January 27 and 12.

Although this great saint did not actually die for the faith by the hand of the executioner, yet he may be styled a martyr, as he died of the maltreatment which he received for defending God's honor and the rights of the Church.

St. John was born at Antioch, about the year 347, and was descended of one of the most illustrious families of that city.[1] His mother, being left a widow at the early

[1] His father, whose name was Secundus, was master of the horse, that is, chief commander of the imperial troops in Syria. His mother was Anthusa, and she had two children, one of whom was a daughter. Anthusa did not wish to marry again, in order to devote herself entirely to the welfare of her children: she herself took care to instil into them the first principles of Christianity. "Never," says Alban Butler, "was

age of twenty years, took particular care in the education oi her child, and placed him under the most eminent masters, to study rhetoric and philosophy. It was expected that the pious youth would attain to great worldly fortune; but he, from his twentieth year, applied himself to the study of the sacred Scriptures and to prayer, and dedicated himself entirely to the service of his crucified Lord. Whereupon St. Meletius, his bishop, took a great liking to him, and having instructed him for three years, made him Lector of his own church.

Although during his stay in Antioch he led a very retired and mortified life, he bethought him of the advantages of a still more solitary and austere state; and consequently retired to a cave, where he passed some years in continual prayer and penitential practices, which were so severe as to injure his health. He was therefore obliged to return to Antioch, where he was ordained deacon by St. Meletius, whose successor, Flavianus, conferred upon him the holy order of priesthood five years afterwards, and in consequence of his great eloquence, appointed him preacher of that church. This office he discharged so well, that public demonstrations of approbation were frequently made, against which the saint protested, saying: " What good can these your applauses do me? That only which I desire is, that you practise what I preach; this to me will be the most acceptable applause."

Nectarius, Patriarch of Constantinople, died in the year 397; and as the name of our saint had obtained great celebrity throughout the entire province, the Emperor Arcadius, the clergy, and people, agreed in having

a woman more worthy of bearing the name of mother." The pagans themselves could not help admiring her virtues; and a celebrated philosopher cried out while speaking of her: "What wonderful women have the Christians!"—Ed.

him promoted to that see. The emperor accordingly summoned him to Constantinople, and without making known to him his design, took him into his carriage, and brought him to a church outside the city, where, notwithstanding his reluctance, he was consecrated by the bishops previously assembled.

The see of Constantinople had unfortunately been governed for sixteen years by Nectarius,[1] a man without learning or zeal; so that this great city, containing as it did so many strangers and heretics, required a thorough reform. To this St. John Chrysostom gave his entire attention. With an untiring and holy zeal he labored for the reformation of his clergy, and endeavored to suppress the avarice and haughtiness of the emperor's court; this made for him many enemies.

It happened that there arrived at Constantinople some monks, who had been expelled from Egypt by Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, under the pretext of Origenism; but St. John being satisfied of their innocence, wrote to Theophilus in their favor, beseeching him not to dis-

[1] He was born at Tharsus, of a patrician family, and had been for some time Prætorof Constantinople. After the cabal which obliged St. Gregory Nazianzen to retire from that see, he was appointed to it. although at the time advanced in years, and not only a layman, but a catechumen, and one, moreover, whose conduct had been irregular. The circumstances that led to his appointment are rather curious, and are given at length by Fleury (*Hist. tom.* iv. *liv.* 18, *num.* v.). Having made a complimentary visit to Diodore, Bishop of Tharsus, this prelate was so taken with his venerable appearance, his majestic mien and the amiability and blandness of his deportment, that he represented him to Flavianus, Bishop of Antioch, as a fit person to occupy the vacant See of Constantinople. Flavianus, knowing that many eminent persons were being presented, laughed at the proposal; but wishing to please his friend, placed the name of Nectarius at the end of the list of candidates, which he presented to the Emperor Theodosius. The emperor used all his influence to have him appointed, and finally succeeded in obtaining his confirmation from the Pope.—Ed.

turb them. He, however, being a haughty and vindictive man, succeeded in raising a persecution against the saint for protecting the monks. The emperor indeed summoned Theophilus to Constantinople, to account for his conduct; but he easily gained over to his side the nobles, bishops, and clergy, who were opposed to St. Chrysostom. But the greatest acquisition to his party was the Empress Eudoxia, who bore a mortal enmity to our saint, on account of having been rebuked by him for her avaricious rapacity in depriving Callitropa of her money and another widow of her land. Backed by this party, Theophilus was enabled to get together a cabal of thirty-six bishops, who from the place where they met styled themselves the *Synod of the Oak,* and having drawn up some false accusations, deposed St. John from his bishopric, and obtained from the emperor a decree for his banishment.

The people, hearing of the decree, surrounded the church to defend their bishop; but St. John, to avoid a sedition, escaped through a private door, and surrendered himself to the guards, who brought him to Bithynia. On the night of the following day Constantinople was shaken with an earthquake, which was regarded as a sign of God's displeasure by all, not excepting Eudoxia, who in the greatest consternation besought the emperor to recall the holy bishop. The entire population went out to meet him, chanting hymns, and bearing lighted torches in their hands, and having arrived at the cathedral, obliged him to seat himself upon the episcopal throne.

Theophilus and his party having tied from Constantinople, the saint resumed the discharge of his pastoral duties, and was treating with the emperor about the convocation of a council to vindicate his innocence, when a new accident totally changed the aspect of his affairs. In the square before the great church of St. Sophia a

.silver statue had been erected to the empress, where dances and public games were performed, which disturbed the sacred offices of the church. The saint strongly rebuked the people for this irreverence; but his zeal only infuriated the Empress Eudoxia, who to satisfy her revenge availed herself of the enmity which Theophilus and other bishops bore our saint. They formed a second cabal, in which they condemned and deposed St. Chrysostom, under pretext that he had reassumed the episcopal function, without having justified himself in synod.

In pursuance of this most iniquitous deposition, an order came from the emperor that he should not enter his church, and he accordingly departed from the city. As this happened upon Holy Saturday, the saint retired to a country chapel, in order to celebrate the sacred offices; but his enemies obtained a troop of four hundred soldiers, and entered the church, where baptism was being administered, wounded some of the priests, and injured some of the children who were about being baptized. Their sacrilegious impiety went so far as to trample on the Blessed Sacrament! Such, in fine, was the uproar, that many of the people ran, in consternation, to hide themselves in the woods and valleys.

Although the Emperor Arcadius had no personal enmity to St. John, he was induced by the importunity of his wife and the hostile bishops to send him into banishment. The saint having received the order, took leave of the bishops who were his friends, and departing through a private door, delivered himself to the soldiers who obliged him to travel day and night, until they arrived at Cucusus, a small city of Aimenia, the place of his banishment; the journey lasted seventy days, during thirty of which the saint suffered from a tertian fever.

When they arrived at Cucusus, the bishop of that place received St. John in his house, who thus found

some repose after so much suffering. The saint here did not remain idle, but employed himself, as much as possible, in instructing the people and relieving the poor. He also wrote many letters to console his friends, and to assist the churches which had been lately founded in Persia and Phoenicia.

Meanwhile, Pope Innocent I. having been informed of the injustice done St. John, did all in his power to assemble a synod where the innocence of the saint would be definitely declared. But his enemies labored successfully to prevent its celebration, and jealous of the fame he was acquiring in his first place of exile, prevailed upon Arcadius to banish him to Pytius, a small town on the borders of the empire. St. John was accordingly consigned to two officers, one of whom was a most brutal man; and having been instigated by the enemies of the saint to cause bis death by maltreatment on the road, he obliged him to travel in the most violent rainsand amid scorching heats, not allowing him to rest in any town, but halting at obscure villages, where no accommodation could be found.

When they arrived at Comana, in Pontus, the inhuman officer obliged him to continue his journey five or six miles to the church where St, Basiliscus, Martyr and Bishop of Comana, had been buried; they lodged in a house contiguous to the church, and in the night the holy martyr appeared to St. John, and exhorted him to have courage, adding: "To-morrow we shall be together." St. Chrysostom, knowing thus that the termination of his sufferings was at hand, besought the soldiers to defer their departure till the morrow: this he could not obtain; but they had travelled only a few miles when, seeing the saint about to expire, they returned to the same house. St. Chrysostom then changed his dress, putting on a while robe; he received the holy Viaticum, and poured forth his last prayer, which he

concluded with an expression he was constantly in the habit of using: "Glory be to God for all things." Having said "Amen," he gave up his soul to God, on the 14th September in the year 407, being about sixty years of age, and having been bishop nine years and almost seven months. A great concourse of monks and persons of rank came from the neighboring provinces to celebrate his funeral. God did not delay the punishment of his enemies, and especially of Eudoxia, who died a few days afterwards. She was soon followed by Arcadius, who expired in his thirty-first year; and these deaths have generally been considered the effects of divine wrath.

But the persecution against the followers of St. John Chrysostom did not end with his death. Tygrius, a priest, and Eutropius, a lector, were particular objects of vengeance; because, after his second departure from Constantinople, the great church of St. Sophia and the senate-house were burned down, and these two ecclesiastics were accused of having done so maliciously. Optatus, an impious pagan, was governor of the city, and he first put Eutropius, as being the younger, to torture, in order that he might reveal the authors of the fire; but Eutropius suffered himself to be torn with iron hooks and burned with torches rather than falsely accuse any person. Palladius[1] writes, that in these tortures he expired. Optatus then caused Tygrius to be scourged, and stretched upon the rack until his bones were dislocated, and finally banished him to Mesopotamia, where he died. The Church honors both of these saints with the title of martyr.[2]

In the year 428, the honors of a saint were first given to St. John Chrysostom, and the archbishop, St. Procu-

[1] This writer attributes the fire to the divine displeasure at the saint's banishment.—*Dialog,* c. 20.

[2] They are mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on the 12th January.

Ins, afterwards persuaded the emperor, Theodosius the younger, to bring the saint's body from Comana to Constantinople ; the translation of the sacred relics was performed with the utmost pomp, the entire population going forth to join in the procession. The arm of the sea over which they passed was covered with barges, and illuminated with torches. When the sacred relics arrived, the Emperor Theodosius, his eyes bathed in tears and fixed upon the coffin, humbly asked pardon of the saint for the injustice done him bv his parents This translation took place on the 28th of January, in the year 438, thirty-one years after the saint's death.I

CHAPTER XXV.

ST. PIONIUS, PRIEST.

February 1.

St. Pionius was a priest of the church of Smyrna ; he was exceedingly learned, and inflamed with the love of Jesus Christ, and a zeal for the conversion of souls, which was successfully exercised in the conversion of many infidels and abandoned sinners.

In his time, that is, about the year 250, the persecution of Decius was raging, and the saint by continual prayer prepared himself for martyrdom, in case such should be his lot. One day, as he was engaged in prayer with zXsclepiades and Sabina, two pious Christians, it was re-

I Later on his venerated relics were transported to Rome and placed in the Vatican Church, under the altar erected in his honor. As the day of his death is that on which is celebrated the feast of the Exaltation of th? Cross, the Greeks keep this feast on November 13, and the Latins, January 27. His wonderful eloquence earned for him the surname of Chrysostom, or Golden Mouth, and his excellent writings the title of Doctor of the Church.—Ed.

vealed to them that, on the day following, they would be arrested for the faith; they therefore made an offering of their lives to Jesus Christ, and placed halters about their necks in order to signify to the soldiers that they were ready to undergo martyrdom.

On the following morning, Palemon, the guardian of the temple, came with a troop of soldiers, and said to them: "Are ye aware of the orders of the emperor, that ye are all to sacrifice to the gods of the empire?" Pionius answered: "That which we know is the order of God—which is, not to sacrifice to any but himself, the sovereign Lord of all." Upon this reply they were all arrested and led into a great square, where St. Pionius, turning to the enemies of the faith, said that they were vainly rejoicing on account of the apostasy of some few bad Christians, and protested that no species of torture would ever compel him to adore those whom they impiously called gods.

Palemon said to him: "And why wilt thou, Pionius, regardless of life, deprive thyself of the beauteous light of the day which thou enjoyest?" The saint replied: "This light is beauteous, but there is another light more glorious, and a life more estimable, to which Christians aspire." The people called upon him to sacrifice, but he answered: "Our resolve is to persevere in the faith."

The people desired that the saint should speak in the theatre, in order that they might all hear him conveniently, but some told Palemon that if he gave him liberty to speak, a tumult might follow; he therefore said to Pionius: "If thou wilt not sacrifice, come with us at least to the temple." The saint said: "Our entrance into your temple cannot benefit your gods." "Then," said Palemon, "thou wilt not be persuaded?" Pionius replied: "Would to God I could persuade ye all to become Christians." Some of the idolaters exclaimed: "Thou canst never induce us to that; we would rather

be burned alive." The saint rejoined: "But it will be worse for you to burn eternally after death."

Palemon, who was anxious to save the life of Pionius, ceased not to importune him; but the saint resolutely answered: "Thou hast orders to persuade or to punish me; thou canst not persuade, therefore punish." Hereupon Palemon, being enraged, asked: "But why wilt thou not sacrifice?" Pionius: "Because I am a Christian." Palemon: "What is the God whom thou adorest ?" Pionius: " I adore the Almighty God, who, having made all things, created us also, as I have learned from Jesus Christ." Palemon: "Sacrifice to the emperor at least." Pionius: " I shall never sacrifice to a man."

The judge then judicially inquired his name, and to what church he belonged. The saint replied: "Iam a Christian, and belong to the Catholic Church." His companions gave the same answer, and they were all sent to prison. On the road thither, some of the idolaters observed that many Christians had sacrificed. The saint answered: "Each one is master of his own will: my name is Pionius." By this he meant to encourage the others to imitate his example, and remain constant in the faith.

When they came to the prison, many Christians offered them refreshments, but Pionius said: "I have not time to think of anything but the martyrdom which awaits me." The guards, seeing so many Christians coming to visit the saint, brought him and his companions to a more remote and obscure place, for which they gave thanks to God, as their more solitary confinement enabled them to commune more freely with God. Notwithstanding the change, however, many Christians, who had abandoned the faith on account of the violence of the torments, came to Pionius, who wept over their fall, and exhorted them to do penance, and hope for pardon, through the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Palemon then arrived with a troop of soldiers, and orders from the proconsul to take the confessors to Ephesus. The saint desired to see the order, but the commanding officer put a halter round his neck, and dragged him so violently as almost to suffocate him. He was thus led to the square; and when the martyrs arrived at the temple, they cast themselves on the ground in order not to enter, but the soldiers dragged them in, and placed them erect before the impious altar. They there met Eudæmon, the unhappy Bishop of Smyrna, who had miserably sacrificed to the gods, and the idolaters vainly hoped that they might be moved by his example to prevaricate also. One of the idolaters wished to place on the head of St. Pionius a crown which had been worn by one of the apostates, but the saint broke it in pieces, and cast it from him. Not knowing what to do to pervert the confessors, they brought them back to prison, and while Pionius was entering, one of the soldiers smote him on the head. The saint bore it with patience, but God chastised his assailant by causing not only his hand but his side to become swollen and inflamed, so that he could not breathe.

After some days, the proconsul arrived at Smyrna, and having summoned Pionius, asked him to what sect he belonged. The saint replied: "I am a priest of the Catholic Church." The proconsul rejoined: "Then art thou a doctor and a professor of folly." Pionius: "No, but of piety." Proconsul: "And of what piety?" Pionius: "Of that piety which has for its object the God who made heaven and earth." The proconsul then commanded him to sacrifice, but the saint replied: "I have learned to adore one only living God." The tyrant then ordered him to be tortured, during which having in vain importuned him to sacrifice, he-finally condemned him to be burned.

In proceeding to the place of execution, St. Pionitrs

walked quickly and with joyous countenance; having arrived at the place, he undressed without assistance, and offered himself to be nailed to the stake, after which the pagans exclaimed: "Repent, O Pionius; promise to obey, and thou shalt be saved." But he replied: "I have not felt the pain of the nails; I desire to die, that the people may know that death shall be followed by resurrection." The pile having been fired, the saint closed his eyes, so that the spectators thought he was already dead, but he was only praying; he opened his eyes, and having concluded the prayer with the usual "Amen," placidly gave up the ghost, saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my soul."

The end of his companions is not upon record, but it is piously believed that they also received the crown of martyrdom,

CHAPTER XXVI.

ST. ADALBERT, BISHOP OF PRAGUE.

April 23.

St. Adalbert was born in Bohemia, of noble parentage, about the middle of the tenth century His father, a Slavonian, sent him to study at Magdeburg, under the care of the Archbishop Adalbert who placed him in a school, under the direction of a holy monk, named

[1] This prelate, charmed with the happy disposition of his pupil, conceived for him the tenderness of a father, and gave him his name in admitting him to the sacrament of confirmation. Young Adalbert was a child of the Blessed Virgin. Being yet an infant, he was attacked by a violent illness that reduced him to extremity. His parents then carried him to the church, and placed him on St. Mary's altar, and promised to consecrate him to the service of God if he should recover his health. Their prayers were heard. (See Alban Butler and Giry.)—Ed.

Odericus, where the pupils, by serious attention to their studies, and most exemplary morals, edified one another.

Adalbert, having remained nine years in this school, made considerable progress in human sciences, but still more in the science of the saints; for whatever time was allowed for recreation, he spent in holy prayer, in relieving the poor, and visiting the sick. Having made a copious collection of books, consisting chiefly of the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, he returned to Bohemia, and entered the ecclesiastical state at Prague. Diethmar, bishop of that city, was greatly enamoured of his virtue, and ordained him subdeacon shortly before his death.

An assembly was held to propose a successor, at which the prince of Bohemia and other grandees were present, and, by unanimous consent, Adalbert was chosen. Notwithstanding all his reluctance, and his pleas of unworthiness and youth, he was obliged to accept the onerous charge; and the election having met the approval of the emperor, our saint received the episcopal consecration at the hands of Villegisus, Archbishop of Mayence. He immediately proceeded to Prague, to take possession of his see, and was received amid the acclamations of the people. Tn assuming the government of his Church, his extraordinary piety became manifest; for on all festivals he distributed abundant alms, and supported twelve poor persons continually. He slept upon the bare floor, or upon sack-cloth, and passed a considerable part of the night in prayer. His continual preaching, and frequent visits to the sick and those in prison, manifested how totally he was devoted to the glory of God and the welfare of his flock.

But they treated his admonitions with an obstinacy surpassing the enthusiasm with which they had at first hailed his arrival; and Adalbert accordingly resolved to

leave them, having first consulted, and obtained permission from Pope John XV. His first intention was to make a pilgrimage on foot to the Holy Land ; but on his arrival at Mount Cassino, the Abbot and some of the monks induced him to remain with them for some time, until it became known who he was ; whereupon the holy bishop proceeded to Rome, and, by the advice of the Pope, received the religious habit in the monastery of St. Alexis, in the year 900. Here he lived in tranquillity for three years and a half, until the Duke of Bohemia, moved by the wretched state of the Church at Prague, induced the Pope to send him back.

Upon his return, the most ample promises of obedience were made, but never fulfilled. So the saint again abandoned his rebellious flock, and went to preach the Gospel to the idolaters of Hungary. His success here, however, was not proportionate to his zeal and the Bohemians continuing as obstinate as ever, he again returned to his monastery at Rome.

He was obliged by the Pope to repair a second time to Prague. The saint set out in obedience to this command ; but being informed that his ungrateful flock had shown their implacable hatred of him by murdering his

[1] Geysa, or Giesa the Fourth, Duke of Hungary, had been converted to the Christian faith, and baptized, together with his entire family. Shortly after his baptism, and just before the arrival of our saint, he was informed in a vision that a heavenly messenger would arrive in his dominions. St. Adalbert was therefore kindly received at his court; and we are informed by Fleury *{Hist., font.* 12, *liv.* 58, *num.* vil.) that his preaching was followed by the conversion of many, and the erection of churches in various places. Geysa had contemplated the establishment of bishoprics throughout his dominions, but was told, in the vision already mentioned, that his hands had been stained with human blood, and that God had reserved the accomplishment of this great work for his son. This promise was amply fulfilled in the per on of St. Stephen, first king of Hungary, who seems to have been bom about the time of St. Adalbert's arrival, and was baptized by him.—Ed.

brothers, he requested the Duke of Poland to ascertain whether they were willing to receive him. The Bohemians replied: "Adalbert is a saint, and we are sinners; so it is impossible to expect that we can live quietly together." The saint took this as a sufficient exoneration from the solicitude of his Church, and went to undertake the conversion of the pagans who were then in Prussia.

After he had suffered many hardships on this mission, the idolaters one day assembled in great numbers, and demanded of him whv he had entered their country. The saint replied that he had come for their salvation, and exhorted them to abandon the worship of idols, and to adore the true God. But the barbarians were displeased at his words, and Siggo, the priest of the idols, ran him through the breast with his lance, whereupon the others rushed upon him also, while the saint, raising his hands to heaven, prayed to the Lord for their conversion. The inhuman wretches placed his head upon a pole, and bore it away amid shouts of exultation. His martyrdom happened on the 23d April, of the year 997, and the Lord honored him by many subsequent miracles.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SS. JAMES, DEACON; MARIANUS. LECTOR; AND COMPANIONS.

April 30.

St. James was a deacon, and St. Marianus a lector, but it is not known for what Church they were ordained, nor is the place of their birth upon record. During the persecution of Valerian, they were travelling towards. Xumidia, and stopped at a certain village called Mugm

as, some distance from the city of Cirtha[1] The persecution was raging violently in the province, and the prefect bore such a mortal hatred towards the Christians, that he recalled those who had been banished during former persecutions, to stand a new trial. This circumstance induced the saints to remain, as they expected to receive there the crown of martyrdom, which they so ardently desired.

Meanwhile, two holy bishops, Agapius and Secondinus,[2] who had been banished for the faith, were passing through Muguas. having been summoned by the prefect for a second trial. James and Marianus felt a still stronger desire of martyrdom, from the example of these two holy prelates, which was satisfied two days afterwards, when they were arrested and brought to Cithra. Some good Christians seeing them in chains, envied their blessed lot, and encouraged them to remain constant. The idolaters perceiving this, asked them whether they were Christians, and having been answered in the affirmative, these also were arrested, and obtained the crown of martyrdom, even before our saints.

James and Marianus being presented before the magistrates of Cirtha, were interrogated concerning their faith. James boldly acknowledged that he was not only a Christian, but a deacon: although he knew that, in the latter case, capital punishment was inevitable. Marianus was cruelly tortured, being hung up, not by the hands, which was the usual method, but by the thumbs, which was far more painful, weights being also attached to his feet, so that his bones were dislocated, and his bowels convulsed; but the holy martyr, having suffered all with wonderful constancy, was sent with James and the others to prison.

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[1] Or Cirta, at present Constantine, in Algiers. The province of Constantine is ancient Numidia, of which Cirta was the capital.—En.

[2] Inscribed in the martyrology under date of April 29.

Here Marianus was consoled with a vision which he related as follows:[1] "I saw a great tribunal and a judge seated thereon; there was a platform on which many confessors were placed, whom the judge successively condemned to death. Methought I was mounting the platform, and saw, near the judge, St. Cyprian, who stretched forth his hand, as it were helping me to ascend. He said to me with a smile: 'Come thou and sit with me.' The judge arose and came with us to the prætorium. We passed through a beautiful meadow, surrounded with high trees, in the midst of which was a limpid fountain; the judge disappeared, and St. Cyprian taking a bowl, drank of the water, which I also drank with pleasure." James hearing this narration, related a vision by which he also had been given to understand that he would obtain the crown of martyrdom.

The saints were then brought before the magistrates, and by them sent to the governor of the province, in company with some other Christians; they found the governor still sitting in judgment on others of the faithful, many of whom he condemned to death; amongst them was Agapius, who immediately after his death appeared in a vision to James, and said to him: "Be ye of good courage, for to-morrow ye shall be with us." So it happened; for on the following day the governor pro-

[1] St. Peter Damian *(Tom. II. in fine)* explains this vision to us. The judge is evidently our Lord himself, who makes his faithful ascend by degrees to the perfection that he requires of them; then he sends them to martyrdom by giving them the strength to triumph, although he seems to disappear at the moment of the combat. St. Cyprian, who comes to the assistance of Marianus, was Bishop of Carthage, a neighboring city in Numidia, and had been martyred only a short time before, in 258; this makes us believe that our two saints belonged to his church. The meadow represents this world through which we are only passing. The high trees are the saints who look down upon us and protect us. The bowl out of which St. Cyprian was the first to drink is the chalice of the passion or martyrdom: " He shall drink of the torrent in the way"—*De torrente in via bibet (Ts.* cix. 7)."—Ed.

nounced sentence of death upon James, Marianus, and the others.

The place selected for the execution was a valley, through which ran a river, with a ridge of hills on both sides. As the number of the condemned was great, the martyrs were placed in rows on the bank of the river, in order that the executioner might pass from one to the other, cutting off their heads, after which the bodies were thrown into the stream, that the spectators might not be disgusted at the sight of so much carnage, While the martyrs, with their eyes bound, awaited the stroke of death, they spoke of the visions by which God was manifesting to them the certainty of their reward. St. Marianus in particular foretold the vengeance which was being prepared by God forthose who were shedding the blood of the guiltless.[1]

When the saints had terminated their struggle, the mother of Marianus was transported with joy at finding herself the mother of a martyr. She is panegyrized by St. Augustine,[2] and by the author of the Acts of those martyrs, who had been a sharer of their prison, and an eye-witness of their martyrdom, which took place in the year 259, under the Emperor Valerian.

[1] The fulfilment of this was not long delayed, for in this very year, or the one following, Valerian's affairs in the East became so desperate that he had to proceed thither in person, and even offered to purchase an inglorious peace from Sapor the First, King of the Persians. This monarch refused to treat with his ambassadors, and requested a personal interview, at which he treacherously seized Valerian, and retained him till his death in captivity, during which he suffered every species of indignity. Fleury relates that he used to have his wretched captive led forth, when he was going to ride, that he might mount his horse by placing his foot on his neck; and that he finally caused him to be flayed alive, and his skin having been dried and dyed red, to be hung up in one of the temples. This and many other calamities which befell the empire were regarded by the Christians as so many instances of divine wrath.—Ed.

[2] *Serm.* 284, *E. B.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ST. LUCY, VIRGIN.

December 13.

St. Lucy was descended of a noble family of Syracuse, which was then regarded as the principal city of Sicily. She lost her father in her infancy; but Eutychia, her mother, took care to educate her properly, and to instruct her well in the doctrines of our holy faith. When our saint arrived at a proper age, her mother began to think of giving her in marriage, but Lucy, who had consecrated her virginity to Jesus Christ, awaited only a favorable opportunity to reveal her resolution to her mother.

This opportunity soon presented itself. Eutychia was afflicted for many years with a flux of blood, without being able to find any effectual remedy. St. Lucy, therefore, persuaded her to repair to the tomb of St. Agatha, martyred a half century before in Catania, where the Lord was pleased to work many miracles, and there to implore her cure. When they arrived at Catania, they prostrated themselves in prayer before the sepulchre of St. Agatha, where Lucy, perhaps from fatigue of the journey, was overpowered with sleep. The blessed martyr appeared to her, and as we read in the Roman Breviary, said: "Lucy! why dost thou demand through my intercession that which, by thy faith, thou canst thyself obtain for thy mother?" She then assured Lucy that God would work the desired cure, and that, for having preserved her virginity inviolate, God would reward her in Syracuse with the same glory she herself had received in Catania.

Lucy, animated by this vision, was the more confirmed in her resolution of remaining always consecrated to Jesus Christ, and told her mother to speak to her no more of marriage, but to distribute her fortune among the poor. Eutychia answered, that at her death she would bequeath all to her, and that she might do with it as she pleased; but Lucy replied, that gratitude for her miraculous cure ought to induce her willingly to deprive herself during life of that which, at her death, she should necessarily leave behind her.

The mother consented, and when they returned to Syracuse, they commenced to sell their property, and to distribute the proceeds among the poor. Lucy's suitor perceiving this, complained to Eutychia; but he found that his representations were totally ineffectual, and, in his rage, accused her before the governor, Paschasius, as being a Christian, contrary to the edicts of Diocletian and Maximian. The saint was accordingly arrested and brought before the governor, who endeavored to persuade her to sacrifice to the idols; but Lucy replied, that the sacrifice most agreeable to God was the relief of the poor, in which she was actually engaged and that she was prepared to sacrifice even her life.

Paschasius replied, that she ought to obey the emperor, as he did; but the saint answered: "Day and night I meditate upon the divine law; and if thou art anxious to please the emperor, I am anxious to please my God; therefore it is that I have consecrated to him my virginity." Paschasius in his rage told her that she was impurity itself. The saint replied: "No, thou art impurity, since thou dost endeavor to corrupt Christian souls, alienating them from God, to serve the devil,—wrongly preferring, as thou dost, the goods of this world to those of heaven." Paschasius: "Torments shall stop thy mouth." Lucy: "Words shall never be wanting to the servants of God. since the Lord hath promised

that the Holy Ghost shall speak through them."[1] Paschasius: "Then the Holy Ghost is within thee?" Lucy: "St. Paul hath said, that those who live chastely and piously are the temples of the Holy Ghost."[2] "Since this is the case," said the tyrant, "I will cause thee to be brought to an infamous place, in order that the Holy Ghost may leave thee." The saint replied: "The body receiveth no stain when the will is averse to sin; on the contrary, the violence you meditate would double my crown."

The governor then threatened the most horrid tortures, in case she continued obstinate. The saint intrepidly exclaimed: "Behold my body ready to suffer every torture! why dost thou delay? Begin the execution of that to which the devil, thy father, prompts thee." Paschasius, maddened with rage, ordered that she should instantly be brought to the place of infamy, in order that she might first lose the honor of virginity, and then be deprived of life.

The guards endeavored to execute this command, but found that God had rendered her so immovable, that all their exertions were insufficient to drag her from the spot. Paschasius in astonishment exclaimed: "What incantation is this?" The saint replied: "This is not an incantation, but the power of God. Why dost thou fatigue thyself? Dost thou not manifestly perceive that I am the temple of the Lord?"

Paschasius, more confused and infuriated than ever, ordered a great fire to be kindled round the saint that she might be burned; but Lucy, nothing daunted, said to the tyrant: "I will pray to the Lord Jesus that the fire may not injure me, in order that the faithful may witness the divine power, and that the infidels may be confused." The friends of Paschasius, unwilling that

[1] *Matt.* X. 20. [2] 1 *Cor.* v. 16-vi. 19.

the people should witness any further miracle, advised him to have her beheaded; but after having been tortured in many other ways, her throat was pierced with the point of a sword.[1] The saint did not expire immediately; she threw herself on her knees, offered her death to God; and having foretold that peace would soon be restored to the Church, consummated her martyrdom, in the year 303 or 304. Her name is inserted in the Canon of the Mass.[2]

[1] See the Breviary and the martyrology.

[2] After the persecution there were built at Syracuse, in honor of St. Lucy, two churches, of which one was in the city where her body was buried, and the other outside of the city, in the place where she was martyred. One of her arms was afterwards taken to Constantinople, and thence to Venice. In the eighth century, the Duke of Spoleto, having made himself master of Sicily, had the relics of the saint taken away to enrich therewith the city of Corsino, in his duchy; and in 970, Thierry, Bishop of Metz, having come to Italy with the Emperor Otto I., obtained this great treasure for the church of St. Vincent at Metz, where he had it deposited in a sumptuous chapel. The second arm was given in 1042 to the abbey of Liutburg. The precious relics of the saint having fortunately escaped the sacrilegious fury of the revolutionists, repose at present in the Church of Ottange (Moselle). They have been everywhere, and are even now, venerated with the greatest devotion. (See

CHAPTER XXIX.

SS. THEODORUS AND NICHOLAS, ABBOTS OF STUDIUS.

November 12 and February 4.

St. Nicholas was born in the city of Canea, in Candia, of noble and pious parents, who sent him to Constantinople for his education, and placed him under St. Theodorus, abbot of the monastery of Studius, from which the saint was called the "Studite." St. Theodorus first placed him in the seminary where the youths were educated apart from the monks, but finding the progress which he made in virtue, he allowed him, while yet very young, to make his religious profession. Nicholas soon manifested that he had dedicated himself to God with-

* A celebrated monastery of Constantinople; hence the surname of Studite, given to St. Theodorus and St. Nicholas. We read in the martyrology', November 12: "St. Theodorus the Studite, who, by the combat that he sustained for the Catholic faith against the iconoclast heretics, has made himself famous in the whole Church." He was of a very distinguished family, and had for his master in spiritual life St. Plato, his uncle, Abbot of Symboleon, then of Saccudion, near Constantinople, where he succeeded him in 794. He was beaten with rcxls and exiled to Thessalonica by order of the Emperor Constantine VI., whose scandalous marriage he had blamed. Having been restored to his community after the sad death of this prince in 797, he assumed the direction of it, and afterwards transferred it to the monastery of Studius in order to avoid the insults of the Mussulmans, who were already making incursions as far as the gates of the city. As for St. Nicholas, we do not find him inscribed in the Roman martyrology, but the Bollandists give his Life on February 4. This Life is so intimately united with that of his illustrious master, that it is, so to speak, one and the same history. This is the reason why we have believed it to be well to place the two names at the head of the paragraph, although the original bears only the name of St. Nicholas.—Ed.

out reserve; he was obedient not only to the abbot, but to every individual of the community; and whatever time remained after the discharge of the duties which were imposed upon him, he spent in holy prayer. Hij example became so edifying, that the monks regarded him as a model of perfection, and besought St. Theodorus to promote him to the priesthood, which dignity he was induced to receive only by obedience.

At this time was raging the persecution of Leo the Armenian, who had deposed Michael I., and declared himself in favor of the Iconoclasts. Having attained the imperial dignity, he wished to bring over the bishops and principal abbots to his party. St. Theodorus having been called to the court for this purpose, resisted the impious attempts of Leo, and was in consequence banished. The charity of St. Nicholas induced him to follow the holy abbot into exile.

When they arrived at the Castle of Mesope, in Mysia, they were shut up in a dark dungeon; and, at the end of a year, were brought out to receive a hundred stripes; after which they were again sent to prison, with the intention of starving them to death, but were subsequently removed to the Castle of Bonitus. An ambassador arrived there from the emperor, to ask them if they had written a letter, condemning his doctrine regarding holy images. Nicholas affirmed that he had written the letter, whereupon the ambassador caused him to be suspended in the air, together with Theodorus, and both to be cruelly scourged for a considerable time. Naked and bleeding as they were, he commanded that they should be exposed 10 the cold, which was at that time very severe, in the hope that they would thus expire. These expectations, however, not having been realized, the saints were again brought back to prison, where they suffered cold, hunger, and· every other hardship, for the space of three years. After this, they were transferred to an-

other prison in Smyrna, where they were again cruelly scourged, and afterwards chained by the feet to a post, for twenty months; during which time they were frequently put to the torture.

The saints, after having suffered seven years' persecution, were at last set at liberty, on the accession of Michael, surnamed the Stutterer, who, on Christmas eve, caused Leo the Armenian to be assassinated in the church, and took possession of his throne. When returning to Constantinople, they were everywhere received with great honors, and several miracles were wrought in their journey. They did not, however, remain a long time in the monastery of Studius, for Theodorus, after fruitless efforts to convert the new emperor, who continued the war against holy images, wished to retire to the peninsula of St. Tryphon, near Calcedonia, in order to lead an eremitical life; and Nicholas followed him. In this place the holy abbot finished his crown, giving up his beautiful soul to God, November 11, 826, at the age of sixty-eight.

Nicholas wished to remain, to live near the sepulchre of his holy master. But a new persecution having been raised by the Emperor Theophilus, who succeeded his father Michael, in the year 829, our saint was obliged to fly from this retreat, and to wander from place to place, until he was received by a pious lady, in one of her country houses, where he remained in the practice of piety, until, upon the death of Naucratius, Abbot of Studius, the monks unanimously elected him their Superior; his enemy, Theophilus, having died in the year 842. He governed the Community for three years, when his humility induced him to resign the office in favor of a holy priest called Sophronius, and to retire again to his solitude.

He enjoyed his retirement for four years only, when the Abbot Sophronius dying, the monks, by their tears

and entreaties, compelled him to assume again the government of the monastery. But here he had to suffer new persecutions; for the Emperor Michael III. took for his associate in the empire, bis uncle Bardas, a most scandalous man, whom St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, had excommunicated for the horrid crime of incest, and was, in consequence, banished from his see, into which the impious Photius was intruded. Our saint, being unwilling to hold communion with this schismatic, retired to a house in the country, belonging to the monastery of Studius.

St. Nicholas having shown, by his departure, his disapproval of the emperor's conduct in banishing St. Ignatius, received a visit in his retirement from the emperor, and Bardas, who wished to gain him over, in order to quiet the people. But the saint openly upbraided Bardas with his excesses, in such unmeasured lerms, that the princes were exceedingly enraged, and forbade him to live in any house belonging to the monastery of Studius. He therefore retired to a little house in Constantinople, which had been given him for charity; but being here subject to the importunity of the emperor, he retired to the island of Chersonesus, where, after two years, he was discovered, arrested, and imprisoned in his own monastery. For two years more he remained here, bound hand and foot.

Basil having succeeded to the empire upon the death of Michael, banished the impious Photius, restored St. Ignatius to his see, and having set our saint at liberty, obliged him to assume, for the third time, the government of the monastery of Studius; where he ultimately died, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, in 868—a martyr, not indeed of blood, but certainly of suffering, constancy, and patience.

CHAPTER XXX,

ST. EULALIA AND ST. JULIA, VIRGINS.

December 10.

St. Eulalia was born of a noble Spanish family at Merida, then the capital of Lusitania, toward the beginning of the fourth century, when the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian was raging most violently, that is to say, in 304.

Her parents were pious Christians, who took care to educate her in sentiments of piety; and they had the consolation of seeing her totally given to practices of virtue and inflamed with the love of Jesus Christ, to whom she consecrated her virginity at a very early age, and for whose honor she was anxious to suffer martyrdom. She therefore took the greatest pleasure in hearing of the victories, or reading the Acts of the martyrs.

St. Eulalia was only twelve years old when she heard the edicts of the emperors published in Merida; yet she began to prepare herself for the struggle. Her mother, perceiving her ardor, endeavored to mitigate it, by representing to her the horrible tortures to which the confessors of the faith were exposed, but this only inflamed the holy enthusiasm of Eulalia still more. Calpurnianus, having arrived at Merida to execute the imperial mandates, her mother brought her to a country house, and watched her very closely.

The saint, inspired by God, spoke to a young lady named Julia, who had been given her as a companion, and persuaded her to escape with her to the city, in search of martyrdom.[1] This they effected in the night,

[1] It is well known that St. Teresa with her young brother did the same thing when she was seven years old. See Volume VIII. pp.

travelling without a light or a guide. The impatient zeal of Eulalia caused her to walk so quickly, that Julia, being unable to keep pace with her, at length exclaimed: "Walk as fast as thou canst—I have a presentiment that I shall receive the crown of martyrdom before thee."

The two young heroines, travelling by night over an unknown country, injured their feet very much; they arrived, however, at the city in the morning, and presented themselves to Calpurnianus, whom Eulalia upbraided with the impiety of doing honor to the devil, by worshipping statues of wood and stone. The prefect, surprised to hear a young girl speak so, asked her who she was, and why she spoke with such boldness. The saint replied: "I am a Christian, and the God whom I adore inspires me with a horror of thy impiety." The prefect said: "But knowest thou, child, to whom thou speakest?" She answered: "I am aware that I speak with the governor, and therefore it is that I call it an impiety to oblige Christians to sacrifice to false gods." Calpurnianus endeavored to gain her over, first by promises, and afterwards by threats; but the saint continued to proclaim herself a Christian, and that she was most anxious to laydown her life for Jesus Christ. Cardinal Orsi[1] and Fleury[2] add, that she spat in the face of the judge, threw down the idols, and trampled upon the flour which had been provided for an offering.

The judge thereupon commanded the executioners to torture her. They lacerated her entire body with scourges armed with lead, poured boiling oil over her wounds, and applied burning torches to her sides and breasts; she, however, bore all this without uttering a word, except to bless the Lord, and return him thanks. The tyrant, enraged at the constancy of the young vin

[1] *Istor. cccl.* l. 9, n. 51. [2] *Hist. eccl.* l. 8, n. 46.

gin, ordered that her flesh should be torn off with iron hooks until the bones should be laid bare. The saint, then, with uplifted eyes, exclaimed: "Behold, my Saviour, these wounds make me believe that I am destined to be thy spouse;—do thou, of thy mercy, render me worthy to be so." Finally, the tyrant, perceiving that nothing could weaken her constancy, determined to burn her alive.

The executioners therefore kindled a great fire around her, and the flames catching her hair she was quickly smothered. This circumstance is described in verse by Prudentius,[1] who lived toward the end of the century in which she suffered. She consummated her sacrifice on the 10th December

Prudentius also relates, and Fleury also adds his testimony, that, when the holy martyr expired, the bystanders saw a dove, so resplendent that it dazzled the beholders, proceeding from her mouth, and winging its flight to heaven.

A great snow fell, and covered the saint's body, which gave the Christians an opportunity of burying it near the place of her martyrdom. When peace had been restored to the Church under Constantine, a magnificent church was raised over her tomb, which the Lord glorified by many miracles. In the eighth century, that the body of the saint might be preserved from the profanations of the Saracens, it was translated to the cathedral of Oviedo, and placed in a rich chapel dedicated in her honor.

While St. Eulalia was undergoing her tortures, her companion, St. Julia, was arrested as a Christian, and condemned to be beheaded; and this was done immediately. Thus was her prediction verified, since she died before our young heroine had consummated her sacrifice.

[1] *Peristeph. hymn.* ().

CHAPTER XXXI.

ST. POLLIO, LECTOR.

April 28.

Cardinal Orsi[1] relates that in the city of Cibales,* Pollio was presented to the governor, Probus, who asked him whether he was a Christian. Pollio answered that he was a Christian, and the chief of the Lectors. Probus asked: "Of what Lectors?" The saint replied: "Of those who read the Word of God to the people." "Of those, perhaps," added Probus, "who are in the habit of seducing silly women, persuading them to refrain from marriage, and to observe a foolish continency?" Pollio rejoined: "Those, indeed, are foolish who abandon their Creator, to follow thy superstitions; on the contrary, they are wise who, notwithstanding their tortures, persevere in the observance of the commandments." Probus: "Of whose commandments speakest thou?" Pollio: "Of those that teach us to adore one only God, and not gods made of stone or wood: that teach sinners to be converted, and the virtuous to persevere—that teach virgins their exalted dignity, and married persons the observance of modesty—that teach subjects to obey, and legislators to command just things; finally, I speak of those commandments that teach us to aspire to eternal life, and to despise the death that thou canst inflict upon us." Probus: "But what happiness can a man hope for, who, with life, has lost the enjoyment of light, and all the pleasures of the world?" The

[1] *Istor. eccl.* l. 9, n. 37.

* *Cibalis,* an ancient episcopal city, the native place of the emperors Valentian and Valens, at Swilei, on the Save, in Illyria.—Ed.

saint answered: "There is an eternal light incalculably better than this, which in a short time must, to us, be obscured forever! Happiness which never ends is, beyond comparison, preferable to that which shortly terminates; and is it prudent to prefer eternal enjoyments to those that quickly fail?"

Probus interrupted the saint's discourse, saying: "What do these words avail? Do that which the emperor hath commanded—sacrifice to the gods." Pollio replied: "Do thou that which hath been commanded thee: I will not sacrifice, for it is written: 'He that sacrifices to devils, and not to God, shall be exterminated.'" Probus: "Then shalt thou be decapitated." Pollio: "Execute thy orders: I am obliged to follow the doctrine which my fathers and bishops have taught me; I shall suffer with joy whatever thou mayest inflict." Probus was so enraged, that instead of ordering his decapitation, he condemned him to be burned alive.

When the saint was led to the place of execution, he offered himself as a sacrifice to God, and blessed his holy name for making him die a martyr for his glory. He suffered courageously on the 27th or 28th of April, in the year 304.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ST. APIAN AND ST. ÆDESIUS, BROTHERS.

April 2 and 8.

St. Apian[1] was born in Lycia, of rich and noble parents, who sent him to Berytus, to study the humanities; and, notwithstanding that the youths of that city were exceedingly corrupt, Apian preserved himself from con-

[1] Also called Aphian and Amphian.

tamination. Being eighteen years of age, he returned to his father's house; but finding that the family had continued idolaters, he retired to Cæsarea, in Palestine, where he was most hospitably received into the house of the celebrated Eusebius, who afterwards became bishop of that city. Under this great master he studied the Sacred Scriptures, and practised those austerities that prepared him for the glorious end which he made.

At this time, in the year 306, the Emperor Galerius Maximian was not only persecuting the Christians, but searching for them with the greatest scrutiny. He caused the families to be enrolled, and each individual to be summoned, that he might either sacrifice or be put to death. Apian prepared himself for this trial, and having understood that the governor was about to offer a solemn sacrifice to the gods, he went, on the appointed day, to the temple. Finding himself influenced by a special inspiration from Heaven, he passed the guards, approached the impious altar, and, while the governor was raising his hand to pour out a libation of wine before the idol, he seized his arm, and earnestly exhorted him to desist from the impiety of offending the true God by sacrificing to demons and images.

The soldiers rushed upon Apian, as though they would tear him to pieces; and, having beaten him most cruelly, brought him to prison, where they put him to the torture of the stocks for four-and-twenty hours. Upon the following day he was brought before the governor, who, having in vain sought to gain him over by promises and threats, ordered that his sides should be torn with iron hooks, until the bones and bowels should be laid bare. He was then buffeted upon the face until he became so deformed, that he could not be identified by those who had formerly known him. The tyrant, perceiving that these torments made no impression upon the saint, caused linen, steeped in oil, to be rolled round

his legs, and then to be set on fire. It is easy to conceive that the saint suffered the most excruciating torture from the new infliction, yet he endured it with undiminished fortitude. The governor, after three days, finding him armed with the same constancy, ordered him to be thrown into the sea.

Eusebius,[1] an eye-witness, relates that upon the execution of this sentence, the city was shaken with an earthquake, and the sea became violently agitated, and cast the body back upon the shore before the gates of Caesarea. St. Apian was not quite twenty-nine years of age at the time of his martyrdom, which took place in the year 306, on the 2d, or, as some will have it, on the 5th, of April.

St. Ædesius,[3] who was the brother of St. Apian, not only according to the flesh, but equally so in faith and piety, also applied himself to the study of philosophy, which served to separate him still more from the world, and unite him to Jesus Christ. In this same persecution he frequently confessed his adorable name, and suffered long imprisonment and various punishments, which he endured with Christian fortitude. He was sent to labor in the mines of Palestine, from which he was subsequently released; but finally, one day, in Alexandria, perceiving a judge pronouncing cruel sentences against the Christians, and delivering over holy virgins to the lusts of abandoned young men, he went forward and spoke with such force against these acts of injustice, that, as Eusebius says, he covered the persecutors with confusion, and received from them the crown of martyrdom. Like his brother, he was horribly tortured, and afterwards cast into the sea.

[1] *De Mart. Palæst.* c. 4. [3] Martyrology, April 8.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ST. GORDIUS, CENTURION.

January 3.

St. Gordius, who was born in the third century, followed the military profession, and obtained the rank ot centurion, or captain. St. Basil the Great, who wrote a homily in praise of this saint, relates that at the time of his martyrdom there was a great persecution of the Christians at Cæsarea; in the public squares idols of wood and stone were exposed, and those who refused to sacrifice to them were tortured and put to death. The consternation of the faithful was very great, for their houses were, with impunity, sacked by the idolaters, the prisons filled with Christians, and while the churches were deserted, the woods and mountains were peopled with the fugitives.

Hereupon St. Gordius renounced his profession, laid aside the military insignia, aud retired to Lhe desert, to unite himself to God by holy prayer and penitential practices. He casually heard that on a certain day public games were about to be celebrated at Cæsarea, in honor of Mars; he accordingly proceeded to the city, and beheld there a great concourse, not only of Gentiles, but of Christians, who, weak in faith, were not ashamed to assist in these festivities of the devil. The saint, inspired by the Holy Ghost, proceeded to glorify the Christian religion, and to reprobate that of the pagans, who adored, and sacrificed to false gods.

The Gen tiles at this interruption of the games vociferated that the saint should be put to death for his temerity; they seized upon him, therefore, and led him to the governor, accusing him of all that he had said. The governor, knowing that he had retired to the mountains,

asked him why he had fled, and afterwards returned. St. Gordius replied: "I have returned, because I am anxious to die for Jesus Christ; and knowing thee to be the most cruel of men, I thought that this afforded me the best opportunity of satisfying my desire."

The tyrant, hearing him speak thus, ordered the executioners to prepare their tortures. The saint, nothing daunted, fervently offered himself to Jesus Christ, and implored strength to suffer for his sake. Scourges, the rack, and fire were used to shake the constancy of the holy martyr, but he said: "Torture me as much as thou pleasest; the more excruciating my agony the greater my reward in heaven; for the wounds which now cover my body, I shall there be covered with a garment of glory; and by the pains which now afflict me, I shall earn everlasting joy."

The governor, perceiving that he could not cause him to prevaricate by tortures, endeavored to gain him over by promises of riches and honors; but the saint answered: "Thou art deceived if thou thinkest that I will barter the joys of heaven for the miserable advantages this world can afford." Finally, the judge perceiving that promises were as ineffectual as threats, pronounced upon him sentence of death.

While the saint was proceeding to the place of execution, his friends exhorted him to yield, for the present, to the wishes of the governor, and not perish thus miserably in his youth. The saint replied: "Weep not for me, but for those who persecute the faithful, since for them eternal fire is prepared; for my part, I am prepared to die, not once, but a thousand times, for Jesus Christ." They urged that, to avoid death, he might deny Jesus Christ with his tongue, though he continued to adore him in his heart. The saint said: "Far be it from me to deny my God with that tongue which he himself hath given me."

He then armed himself with the sign of the cross, and went boldly to encounter death, which, according to St Basil and the Menologies of the Greeks, was that of fire, in which he gloriously consummated his martyrdom.[1]

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ST. CHRYSOGONUS, PRIEST, AND ST. ANASTASIA, WIDOW.

November 24 and December 25.

St. Chrysogonus, who is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass, was a Roman priest; there are no Acts of this saint's martyrdom, and that which we know of is derived from the Acts of St. Anastasia, who is also mentioned in the Canon of the Mass, and is commemorated by the Church on the 25th of December. From these Acts we discover that St. Chrysogonus, during the persecution of Diocletian, was giving most exemplary proofs of his piety at Rome. He passed his nights in the subterraneous oratories, and by day visited the houses of the Christians, to strengthen them in the faith, while he also effected many conversions among the Gentiles.

Most remarkable among the children of his ministry was Anastasia, a Roman lady of noble descent. Her father, Praetextatus, was an opulent and noble pagan; but her mother, who was a Christian, caused her to be

[1] The Menology of Basil, quoted by Bollandus, does not mention the kind of death that St. Gordius suffered. The Menologies of the Greeks, which arc also quoted by Bollandus, say that he perished by the sword: *Ferro occubuit.* Baronius (anno 304, n. 62) leads us to believe that his throat was cut: *Jugulum ferro obtulit.* St. Basil, however, speaks only of flames to which the martyr was consigned. Perhaps the holy martyr was stabbed on the funeral pile and burned afterwards as a vic tim immolated as a holocaust.—Ed.

baptized in her infancy, and secretly reared her in sentiments of Christian piety, in which she made great progress.

The active zeal of St. Chrysogonus in assisting the Christians, quickly discovered him to the persecutors; he was accused before the prefect at Rome as being the greatest enemy of the gods and of the imperial edicts; he was accordingly sent to a prison, which he found full of Christians. St. Anastasia, inflamed with the love of God, occupied her time in consoling and succoring the Christians, particularly those who were in prison, whom she exhorted to suffer for the faith. Having heard of the arrest of St. Chrysogonus, she hurried to his prison, and esteemed herself fortunate in having it in her power to be of service to him in this trial. St. Chrysogonus had been in prison for a year, during which he ceased not to instruct and animate those of his fellow-prisoners who were Christians, and he had also the consolation of converting many pagans to the faith. In this St. Anastasia rendered him much assistance, by reason of her extraordinary works of charity, which afforded the greatest edification.

We must here observe, that St. Anastasia had been married to a noble Roman, named Publius, who was a pagan; he loved his wife much, but having discovered her acts of piety, and that she was a Christian, from a loving husband he became a cruel tyrant, confined her to the house, and treated her like a slave. The saint, instead of being mortified at this maltreatment, was rejoiced, as she considered that she suffered for the love of Jesus Christ; but she was afflicted at seeing herself prevented from assisting the confessors of the faith, and accordingly wrote to St. Chrysogonus, requesting him to pray to God that he would either convert her husband, or take him out of the world in case he was determined to remain obstinate. St. Chrysogonus, in

answer, exhorted her to be patient, and gave her an assurance that God would shortly console her.

This letter animated the saint with new courage to suffer the increased cruelty of her husband, who doubled the hardships of her confinement, and allowed her so scanty a portion of food, that she thought she could not long survive. She therefore wrote again to her holy director, imploring him to offer frequent prayers to the Almighty in her behalf, that she might die in the grace of God. The saint replied, that Jesus Christ permitted these things, because he loved her, and that she should prepare herself to endure still greater sufferings for his glory. So in fact it happened; for Publius, her cruel husband, having been appointed by the emperor ambassador to the King of Persia, gave orders to his domestics that they should so maltreat his wife during his absence that there would be no fear of her being alive upon his return. God, however, ordained it otherwise, for Publius met with an untimely death upon his journey; while the saint, having regained her liberty and her property, resumed her pious labors in behalf of the prisoners of Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile, St. Chrysogonus had remained two years in prison, during which time he ceased not to attend to the spiritual wants of his brethren, and to make new conversions among the pagan prisoners; of which Diocletian being informed, he commanded that the saint should be brought before him, at Aquileja, where he then was. The tyrant used all his endeavors to pervert the holy priest, and offered him even the prefecture of Rome as the reward of his apostasy; but the saint replied, that he knew of no honor so great as that of serving the true God; that he found no pleasure in life, except that of sacrificing it to Jesus Christ; and finally, that the religion ot the empire was only a compound of fables, which, instead of being entitled to veneration,

deserved only to be despised. Diocletian, infuriated at these words, ordered that his head should be instantly struck off, which was accordingly done, on the 24th November, in the year 303.

On this day his festival is celebrated by almost all the Western Churches. The saint's body was thrown into the sea after his martyrdom, but was found two days afterwards on the shore, by a holy priest named Zoilus, who piously buried it in his house; and who, after thirty days, received an assurance from the martyr in a vision, that his charity would be soon rewarded. From the fifth century there was a church in Rome dedicated to this saint; it was rebuilt in 740, by Pope Gregory III., and at present gives title to a Cardinal.

Now come we to relate the martyrdom of St. Anastasia. After the death of St. Chrysogonus, the emperor ordered that all the confessors who were in prisons at Rome should be brought to Aquileja. Thither, therefore, repaired Anastasia to exercise her charity; but, being informed that many were about to be sent to Macedonia, together with Agapia, Chionia, and Irene,[1] who had already been sentenced, she resolved to accompany them, and to afford them whatever assistance she could, by bribing the guards to obtain admission, as she had done on former occasions. Having privately sold all that she possessed, she had ample means to succor the sufferers for the faith. She proceeded one day to the prison upon her errand of charity, and having found that all the holy confessors had been butchered by order of the emperor, she wept bitterly. Some of the officers of the court being present, asked her the cause of her tears. "I weep," replied the saint, "because I have lost

[1] Three sisters, virgins and martyrs, executed at Thessalonica. The first two were burnt alive on April 3, and the third on April 5, according to the martyrology. Dom Ruinart has recorded their Acts in his collection, after Baronius and Surius.—Ed.

my brethren, who have been cruelly put to death." She was hereupon arrested, and brought before Florus, prefect of Illyricum.

The prefect understanding that she was the widow of Publius, a favorite of the emperor, who had died on his journey to Persia, spoke to her in a very respectful manner, and labored much to induce her to abandon her faith; but perceiving by her answers that he was only losing his time, he sent her to the emperor.

Diocletian's avarice induced him to ask her, first of all, what she had done with her riches; and the saint answered, that she had distributed them among the poor and the Christians, who were so unjustly persecuted. The emperor, although irritated at the declaration, com tinued to exhort her in respectful language to abandon a religion which was proscribed throughout the empire; but finding her constancy still the same, he sent her back to Florus.

The latter gave her over to Upian, the pontiff of the capitol, in the hope that he would induce her to sacrifice to the gods. Upian having used all his arts of persuasion in vain, said to her: il Now I shall give thee but three days to determine." Anastasia replied: " They are three too many; thou mayest imagine them already past. I am a Christian, and am anxious to die for Jesus Christ. From me thou shalt never get any other answer." Upian then employed the assistance of three idolatrous women ; but this having proved also ineffectual, he made a second attempt himself, in which he had the effrontery to be guilty of some immodest action. This was instantly punished by the Almighty; for he was struck blind upon the spot, and seized by convulsions that within an hour terminated his life.

Florus, enraged at the death of Upian, caused the saint to be shut up in prison, with the intention of starving her; but the Lord having miraculously preserved

her life, the prefect believed that the jailer had transgressed his orders, and therefore caused her to be removed to another prison, where also she still continued to live without food. The prefect having some unwillingness to shed her blood, ordered her to be put on board a ship, which was bored, together with one hundred and twenty idolaters who had been condemned to that death. The ship soon filled with water, but instead of sinking went ashore; and the miracle worked the conversion of all these persons, who afterwards had the glory of suffering martyrdom for Jesus Christ. St. Anastasia was then conducted to the island of Palmarola, under sentence of death; she consummated her triumph in the flames.

A Christian lady obtained her body, and gave it honorable burial near Zara, in Dalmatia; but about the year 460, under the Emperor Leo, her relics were translated to Constantinople, and placed, as Cardinal Orsi writes,[1] in the celebrated church of the Resurrection, called *The Anastasia*.[2] This church was used by St.

[1] *Istor. eccl.* l. g, n. 45.

* Alban Butler says with greater authority that the relics translated to Constantinople seem to have been those of St. Anastasia the Elder, martyred at Sirmich (or at Rome, according to the martyrology, October 28, and our author, Chap. LVII.), under Valerian, and that the body of St. Anastasia, widow, called the Junior, was transferred to Rome and deposited in the church that still bears her name. It was in this church that the Pope in ancient times used to celebrate the second Mass of Christmas, in which a commemoration of the saint is made. The holy widow did not live a long time with her unworthy husband; she was therefore very young; and we read in her first letter to St. Chrysogonus that she had preserved her virginity. This is undoubtedly the reason why several authors give her the title of virgin.—Ed.

[2] The origin of this appellation was the following: The violent Arian Bishop, Macedonius, obtained from the Emperor Constantius an edict commanding that the churches of all those who maintained that God the Son was consubstantial with the Father should be pulled down. This

Gregory Nazianzen as a cathedral, and was afterwards burned during the episcopate of St. John Chrysostom. The feast of St. Anastasia is celebrated on the 25th of December, Christmas Day.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ST. FRUCTUOSUS, BISHOP OF TARRAGONA, AND HIS TWO DEACONS, ST. AUGURIUS AND ST. EULOGIUS.

January 21,

The Acts of these martyrs, as found in Ruinart, relate that in the year 259, under the Emperors Valerian and Gallien, the Bishop Fructuosus, Bishop of Tarragona, in Spain, with his two deacons, Augurius and Eulogius, were apprehended by order of Emilian, the governor of the province.

The holy prelate had retired to his room when the soldiers came to arrest him. On hearing the noise he opened the door; and being informed that the governor had summoned him and his two deacons, he said: "We are ready; but if you permit me, I will put on my shoes." This done, the three confessors were led to prison.

intolerant measure affected the Novatians as well as the Catholics, and one of their churches in Constantinople was demolished. They, however, assembled in such numbers, and men, women, and children labored so perseveringly, that in a surprisingly short time they transferred the materials to the other side of the water, and built their church there. The Emperor Julian afterwards gave them their original site, and again they brought back their materials; and having rebuilt the church, and rendered it more magnificent than before, they called it "The Anastasia," i.e., the resuscitated. It is in this sense only that it can be styled "The Church of the Resurrection," for it was not dedicated in honor of the Resurrection of our Lord, but to the Eternal Wisdom, as the title, *Sancta Sophia,* implies.

Aftersix days' imprisonment they were brought before the governor, who, turning to Fructuosus, said: "Hast thou heard that which the emperors have commanded?" The saint replied: " I know it not; but this I know, that I am a Christian." Emilian: "They have commanded that the gods be honored." Fructuosus: " For my part. I adore only one God, who hath made heaven and earth." Emilian: "Art thou not aware of the existence of the gods?" Fructuosus: "I am not." Emilian: "Shortly thou shalt be. To what will men render homage, if they adore not the gods and the images of the emperors?" Then turning to Augurius, the deacon, he said: " Give no ear to the words of Fructuosus." Augurius replied: "I adore one omnipotent God." The governor then turned to Eulogius and said: "Perhaps thou also adorest Fructuosus?" The deacon replied: "No; I adore him not; but I adore the same God whom he worships." The governor, then turning to Fructuosus, asked him: "Art thou the bishop?" The saint replied: "Yes, I am." Emilian said: "Thou shouldst have rather said, ' I have been,' for thou shalt be so no longer. I condemn ye all three to the flames."

Whilst St. Fructuosus and his deacons were being led to the amphitheatre to undergo their sentence, the people, moved to compassion for the venerable bishop, who was beloved not only by the faithful, but even by the idolaters, presented him a cup, requesting him to drink and be strengthened; but he refused, saying, that it was not yet the hour for breaking the fast? When they arrived at the amphitheatre, the saint appeared filled with a tranquil joy; his lector, Augustalis, came to him weeping, and begged he would permit him to take off

' There was question, says Alban Butler, of the fast called the fast of the stations, which was kept on Wednesdays and Fridays; it was not broken til) None, that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon, and it w'e then ten o'clock in the morning.—Ed.

his shoes. "No, my son," replied the holy bishop, "allow me to take them off myself; for the certainty which I have of the divine promises gives me sufficient strength." Having taken off his shoes, one of the faithful took him by the hand, and desired he would remember him in his prayers. The saint replied: "I am bound to pray for the whole Catholic Church, from east to west." By these words, as St. Augustine observes, he wished to signify that each one of the faithful becomes a participator in all the prayers of the Church.

When he was about to receive the crown of martyrdom he raised his voice, as the Acts relate, and said to the Christians: "Be not afraid; you shall not be left without a pastor, for the love and the promises of the Lord never fail. That which you see me now about to suffer, is the pain only of an hour." Having said these words, he was, together with his companions, encircled with fire; but the Lord so disposed it, that the flames consumed only the bands with which their hands were tied; wherefore, being at liberty to stretch forth their arms, they prostrated themselves in prayer, and raising their hands to Heaven, besought the Almighty to allow the fire to consume them, that their sacrifice might be completed. The Lord vouchsafed to hear their prayers, and, placidly expiring, they went to receive the reward of their martyrdom.

After their death, God was pleased to glorify his servants, by manifesting their triumph to two Christians, Babylas and Mygdone, who were domestics of the governor. These saw the heavens open, and St. Fructuosus between his two deacons, surrounded with a halo of glory, and ascending to receive their crowns. They called Emilianus to witness the ascent into heaven of those whom he had that day condemned; but he was unworthy a heavenly vision.

The faithful, who were exceedingly afflicted at the death of their pastor, came in the night to the amphitheatre, extinguished the smouldering remains of the fire, and were carrying away the bones of the martyrs; but the holy bishop appeared to them, and commanded that all the relics should be buried together.

The Acts of these martyrs terminate with the following devout aspiration: "O blessed martyrs! like gold, they have been tried in the furnace, and found worthy a crown of everlasting glory: to this crown their example invites us also!" St. Augustine, in a sermon delivered on the anniversary of these martyrs, observes that, from the fact that they have attained to such glory, although being men of the same condition that we are, we should hope to overcome all the obstacles to our salvation, through the grace of Jesus Christ, who can render that easy, which our weakness looks upon as insuperable.[1]

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ST. IRENÆUS, BISHOP OF SIRMIUM.

March 25.

It is believed that St. Irenaeus was born in the city of which he was afterwards bishop; and, although it is probable that his parents were pagans, he professed the faith of Jesus Christ from his childhood. He married at an early age, and had many children, whom he left young behind him at the time of his martyrdom. This saint gave such extraordinary examples of virtue, that he deserved to be made Bishop[2] of Sirmium while yet a young man; and from the time he received that charge, he ceased not to combat the enemies of the faith, and to

[1] *Serin.* 273, *E. B.*

[2] See note, page 113=

defend his flock from their artifices, until he terminated a brilliant career in the glory of martyrdom.

The edicts of the Emperor Diocletian against the Christians were published in Sirmium in the year 304, and Probus, the governor of Lower Pannonia, was most indefatigable in putting them into execution. The ecclesiastics, and particularly the bishops, were the first objects of his unholy zeal; for he thought that by striking the pastors he could the more easily disperse the flock of Jesus Christ.

Irenaeus was accordingly arrested, and brought before Probus, who said to him : "Obey the imperial edicts, and sacrifice to the gods." The saint replied: "The Scripture saith that whosoever sacrifices to false gods shall be exterminated."[1] Probus: "The princes have commanded that all Christians shall sacrifice to the gods, or shall be tortured." Irenæus: " But I have been commanded to suffer all tortures rather than deny my God, and sacrifice to demons." Probus: "Either sacrifice, or I will put thee to the torture." Irenæus: " In doing so, thou shalt please me; for thus shall I be made a participator of the Passion of my Saviour."

Hereupon the governor commanded that he should be tortured; and, seeing that he suffered much, said: "What dost thou now say, Irenæus? Wilt thou now sacrifice?" The saint replied: "I sacrifice, by my confession, to my God, to whom I have always sacrificed."

During the torments of St. Irenæus, his father, his wife and children, his domestics and friends, came to implore of him to obey the emperors. His children embraced his feet, crying out: " Father, if thou hast no pity for thyself, have pity, at least, on us." The wife, with many tears, besought him not to leave her disconsolate; while his friends exhorted him not to throw away

[1] *Dent.* xiii.

his life in his youth. But the saint, like an immovable rock upon which the waves lose their strength, armed himself against their assaults with the words of the Saviour: *'But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny hint before my Father who is in heaven.'* To their importunities he returned not a single word of reply, but sighed only for the consummation of his martyrdom. Probus then said to him: "Irenaeus, abandon this thy folly; sacrifice to the gods, and destroy not thyself in the prime of life." The saint answered: "It is that I may not destroy myself for all eternity, that I refuse to sacrifice." He was then taken down and sent to prison, where he had to endure various tortures for several days.

After some time, Probus, seated upon his tribunal, ordered that the holy bishop should be agàin brought before him, and, upon his appearance, said: "Irenaeus, now at length sacrifice, and free thyself from the torments which otherwise await thee." The saint replied: "Do that which thou art commanded to do, and do not at all imagine that I am likely to obey thee." Probus, enraged at this answer, caused him to be scourged in his presence, during which infliction the saint said: "From my childhood I have adored the one only God, who has always assisted and comforted me, and I cannot adore gods made by the hands of men." Probus: "Let the torments which thou hast already suffered suffice thee; free thyself from death." Irenaeus: "I do free myself from death, when, by the pains which I suffer, I gain eternal life."

The governor then asked him, whether he had a wife, children, or parents alive; but Irenaeus answered that he had not, adding: "I say I have not, because Jesus Christ hath declared that whosoever loveth father or mother, wife or children, more than Him, is not worthy

[1] *Matt.* x. 33.

of Him."[1] Probus: "Sacrifice at least for thy children's sake." Irenaeus: "My children have God to provide for them." Probus: "Do not oblige me to put thee again to the torture." Irenaeus: "Do thy pleasure; but thou shalt see what constancy my Lord Jesus Christ will give me to overcome all thy arts."

Probus then ordered Irenaeus to be càst into the river; but the saint, hearing the sentence, exclaimed: "I thought, that, after so many threats, thou wouldst have caused me to suffer many tortures, and to be cut to pieces; I beseech thee to do so, that thou mayest perceive how Christians, who have faith in God, despise death."

Probus, enraged at these words, ordered that the saint should be beheaded, and then cast into the river. The holy bishop, perceiving that his end was approaching, returned thanks to Jesus Christ for having given him the necessary fortitude, and for calling him, by such a death, to the participation of his glory. When he arrived at the bridge of Diana, which was the place selected for the execution,; he threw off his garments, and prayed thus: "O Lord Jesus Christ! who didst vouchsafe to die for the salvation of the world, I beseech Thee that Thy angels may receive my soul; since I most willingly suffer death for the honor of Thy name, and the edification of Thy Church. Receive me into Thy glory for Thy mercy's sake, and strengthen my flock in Thy holy faith." His head was then struck off, and his body thrown into the river Save.

[1] *Matt.* x. 37.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SS. CECILIA, VIRGIN; VALERIAN, HER HUSBAND; TIBURTIUS, HER BROTHER-IN-LAW; AND MAXIMUS, OFFICER.

November 22 and April 14.

St. Cecilia, virgin and martyr, has always been most celebrated in the Church of God; even from the fourth century a church has been dedicated to her honor in Rome; and honorable mention is made of her, not only in all the martyrologies, but even in the Canon of the Mass. In the eighth century there was a report that Astulphus, King of the Longobards, had carried off the body of our saint from Rome; but she appeared, in a vision, to Pope Paschal I., assured him that the report was false, and encouraged him to seek her relics. The holy pontiff found them, in the cemetery of Praetextatus, on the Appian road; and, having rebuilt her church, placed them there in the year 821. After a lapse of nearly eight centuries, when the place in which the saint's body had been deposited was forgotten, it was again discovered, in 1599,[1] in a case of cypress-wood, within a marble sarcophagus, together with some linen cloths, steeped in her blood. The celebrated Cardinal Baronius witnessed this second discovery; and Pope Clement VIII. placed the case, containing her body, in another very precious one of silver, where it still remains.

As regards the history of St. Cecilia, we must observe that some writers doubt the authenticity of her original

[1] This was on the occasion of the second rebuilding of her church, by Cardinal Paolo Emilio Sfrondato, to whom Rome is indebted for the present most magnificent church called " Santa Cecilia *in Traslruere."*

Acts; but, as they have been generally received, in both the Greek and Latin Churches, for fourteen centuries, we shall make use of them in the present narration.' According to the most generally received opinion, our saint was born at Rome about the beginningof the third century, and was descended of a most ancient Roman family. She professed the Christian faith from her childhood, although it is uncertain whether her parents were Christians or idolaters. By reason of her extraordinary natural endowments, she was sued for by the most opulent and noble of the Roman youth, but invariably declined their offers, as she had dedicated herself entirely to Jesus Christ, and resolved that He only should be her spouse. It is said of her, that she took great delight in playing upon musical instruments, accompanying herself upon which, she used to sing the praises of the Lord. Her Acts also relate that she continually carried about with her a copy of the holy Gospels, in order that she might follow the blessed maxims and counsels therein contained; and her life was accordingly spent in holy prayer, and the mortification of the senses.

In the mean time, her parents determined to give her in marriage to a noble youth, named Valerian. Cecilia, however, lost not her courage; but, during the three days that immediately preceded her marriage, she observed a rigorous fast, and put on a rough sackcloth, which she never afterwards took off. To these penitential practices she added continual prayer, beseeching the Lord Jesus Christ, that he would not permit her to lose that virginity which she had already consecrated to him. She was heard. The Lord consoled her through her angel guardian, who, appearing visibly to her, told her

[1] Dom Gucranger, in his history of St. Cecilia, defends these Acts with as much learning as argument against the critics of whom they have been the targets in the two last centuries.—Ed.

that he would assist her, and that Valerian, although destined to be her spouse, should not offend her. With this assurance she consented to the marriage.

Upon the night following the celebration of this ceremony, St. Cecilia said to Valerian: "Know, Valerian, that I am a Christian. From my infancy I have been consecrated to God, by dedicating to him my virginity; and he has appointed an angel from heaven to protect me from every insult. At thy peril, therefore, do not anything to me, by which thou mayest excite the wrath of the Lord." Upon hearing this, Valerian was afraid to touch her, and said that he also would believe in Jesus Christ, if he were allowed to see the angel. Cecilia overjoyed at this announcement, told him that he could not expect such a favor without being baptized. Valerian, inflamed with the desire of seeing the angel, said he was willing to comply with this condition. Hereupon Cecilia directed him to St. Urban, who, by reason of the persecution, was concealed in the catacombs; and Valerian, having received the necessary instruction, was baptized by that holy Pope.

On his return home he found St. Cecilia in prayer, and accompanied by the angel, surrounded with rays of heavenly splendor. As soon as he recovered from the vision, he determined to use all his energies in order to induce his brother, Tiburtius, whom he tenderly loved, to embrace the Christian faith. To this end he related what had happened to himself; and Cecilia, who was present at their conversation, undertook to demonstrate to Tiburtius the truth of the Christian religion, and to show that the superstitions of the pagans were a collection of fables and falsehoods, invented by the devil for the perdition of souls. While she spoke, the grace of God touched the heart of Tiburtius, and he also was instructed and baptized by St. Urban.

The two brothers being thus happily made followers

of Jesus Christ, employed themselves in relieving the poor, consoling the confessors of the faith, and burying the bodies of the martyrs. Almachius, prefect of Rome, and mortal enemy of the Christians, being informed of this, summoned them to his presence, and rebuked them for thus identifying themselves with the Christians; but they answered that, having been illuminated by God, they were led to know the vanity and deceit of all worldly things, and that it was madness to prefer the transitory goods of this life to the inamissible joys of heaven. The prefect asked: "Who has taught ye this folly?" They answered: "It is folly, sir, to worship a statue of stone or of wood, instead of the true God, and to prefer a life that lasts but a few days, to an eternal beatitude. Heretofore we also have partaken of this folly, but henceforth we are resolved to be wiser. And thou, Almachius, shouldst thou continue to worship false gods, shalt bewail thy folly after death, when there shall be no remedy for thy eternal ruin."

Almachius, enraged at this admonition, caused the brothers to be scourged so cruelly that they were very near expiring under the infliction; yet these young Christians ceased not their thanksgiving to Jesus Christ for having made them worthy to shed their blood for his sake. The prefect then decreed that they should be brought to the temple of Jove to sacrifice, commanding at the same time that they should be put to death in case of refusal. The execution of these orders was entrusted to an officer named Maximus.

The latter, seeing the joy with which the martyrs anticipated death, inquired the reason of their rejoicings. Tiburtius answered: "How is it possible that we would not rejoice, finding that we are about to pass from this miserable life to one of ineffable and never-ending felicity?" Maximus: "There is, then, another life after the oresent?" Tiburtius: "Most undoubtedly. Our souls 'I

are immortal; and after this life, which, although short, is so full of tribulation, there is another life prepared by God for those who serve him faithfully." Maximus, moved by these words, but more so by the grace of God, said: ",If things stand thus, I also will be a Christian."

The execution of the sentence pronounced against the two saints was thus deferred to the following day; and Maximus was instructed and received baptism that same night, in the presence of St. Cecilia, who spoke most encouragingly of the glory of martyrdom. On the day following the two brothers were beheaded; and Maximus saw their souls, like two bright stars, surrounded by angels, entering into heaven; whereupon, weeping with joy, he exclaimed: "O ye blessed servants of the true God ! Who can comprehend your glory as I see it? As I also am a Christian, why can I not enjoy the same blessed lot ?" Almachius having heard that his officer had been converted, and that his conversion had been followed by that of many others, ordered him to be beaten with rods. This order was so cruelly executed, that the saint expired during the infliction. The relics of the two martyred brothers were first buried in a place four miles distant from Rome, but were translated to the church of St. Cecilia, in the year 821, by Pope Paschal I.

St. Valerian and St. Tiburtius had left all their property to St. Cecilia, who, foreseeing that her death was not far distant, sold all, and distributed the proceeds among ihe poor. Almachius discovered that she was a Christian, and had her arrested. Those who were leading her to prison wept to see a young lady of noble birth and extraordinary beauty about to be condemned to death, and besought her to abjure Jesus Christ; but she on the other hand, weeping over their blindness, said: "Ye speak thus because you are ignorant of the happiness of dying for Jesus Christ. Know, then, that I desire nothing more ardently." Filled with holy zeal, she showed to

the crowd of pagans that surrounded her how happy is the lot of those who believe in the true God, and forego all worldly felicity in the hope of an eternal recompense. Having spoken for some time, she asked them if they believed what she said; and they answered: "Yes, we believe, and wish to become Christians." This discourse was followed by the conversion of four hundred persons, who were baptized by St. Urban, and the greater part of whom laid down their lives for Jesus Christ.

The glorious conquest of the souls which she had made filled our saint with holy jubilee as she proceeded to prison. Upon being brought before Almachius, he was so enraptured with her beauty and her eloquence that he found himself inclined to dismiss her without any further punishment; but being informed that great numbers had been converted through her means, he endeavored to frighten her by threats of death, in case she refused to obey the edicts. St. Cecilia replied: "You, indeed, condemn us to death; but, instead of the wretched existence which we thus lose, our God gives us an everlasting life of happiness. How, then, can you wonder that Christians have so little fear of death? You adore a statue of stone formed by a sculptor's chisel, or an image made from a block that has grown in the forest. These are your gods! But the Christians, on the contrary, adore one only God, the Creator of all things; and for so doing you condemn them to die! And why? Because, forsooth, they will not commit acts of impiety!" Almachius became infuriated at these words, and told her she should obey the emperor; the saint replied that she considered the obligation of obeying God much more stringent. The governor then remanded her to prison.

Fearing that the public execution of such a person might cause a sedition, he ordered that she should be

shut up in an oven and suffocated. This, however, not having produced the desired effect, an executioner was sent to cut off her head. The law, in such case, permitted only three strokes; these the executioner gave with all his might, but, failing in his attempt, left her still alive, although weltering in her blood. She prayed to the Lord that she might survive for three days, in order to strengthen in the faith those whom she had converted; and during the entire of this period the house[1] was filled with these zealous neophytes, who became thoroughly confirmed in their religion by the exhortations of St. Cecilia. At the expiration of the three days she placidly rendered her soul to God, and went to receive the reward of so many heroic actions, on the 22d November, in the year 232.

St. Urban, who assisted at her death, had her body buried in the cemetery of Calixtus, and formed her house into a church, which he dedicated.

[1] There exists to the present day a tradition that St. Cecilia was confined, not in the common prison, but in her own house, perhaps out of respect to her rank. This is the more probable as she suffered under the Emperor Ale.xander Severus, who was very favorable to the Christians; for although, as Cardinal Orsi and Tillemont relate, several of them suffered martyrdom during his reign, this was owing to popular disturbance, or to the tyranny of the governors. It was thought necessary to record the opinion, that the saint was imprisoned in her own dwelling; as, without the knowledge of this circumstance, several of the facts stated by our holy author might appear dubious. It is only by supposing this circumstance and her having amply satisfied the avarice of the guards, that we can imagine it possible for her to have summoned St. Urban from the catacombs, and to have held such assemblies in her prison. The oven or stove in which they attempted to suffocate the saint was that which warmed the domestic baths.—Ed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ST. AGNES, VIRGIN.

January 21.

The name of St. Agnes has obtained universal celebrity. St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Maximus, Prudentius, and other illustrious writers[1] have been her panegyrists, and she is also mentioned in the canon of the Mass.

She is said to have been descended of very noble and pious parents, and to have been but twelve or thirteen years of age at the time of her martyrdom. Her extraordinary beauty caused her to be desired by many as their future spouse, but her principal suitor was Procopius, son of Symphronius, governor of Rome, who sent her a rich present, signifying that he was most anxious to be her husband. But the saint, who had dedicated her virginity and all her affections to Jesus Christ, answered him that she had been promised to another spouse. Procopius, nothing discouraged by this answer, continued his ineffectual importunities, until at last the saint, wishing to free herself forever from his unwelcome attentions, said to him: "Begone from me, thou food for death! I am already engaged to another and a far better[2]

[1] Among these, St. Jerome should not be forgotten, whose beautiful and concise eulogy of the saint was considered by Baronius as her most appropriate panegyric: "By the writings and the tongues of all nations, particularly in the churches, hath St. Agnes been praised, who overcame both the tenderness of her age and the cruelty of the tyrant and sanctified the honor of her chastity with the glory of martyrdom."—

[2] *Hier. Ep.* viii.

spouse. He is the King of Heaven, to whom I have consecrated my entire being."

Procopius not knowing what to do, employed the assistance of his father Symphronius, whose authority, he thought, might induce Agnes to comply. The governor accordingly summoned her to his presence, and told her he could not conceive why she should refuse the hand of his son, as it was impossible for her to obtain a more advantageous match. The saint replied, that she had a divine spouse, who was far preferable to his son. The governor being unable to conceive what she meant by a "divine spouse," one of the gentlemen in waiting said to him: "That young lady is a Christian, and the divine spouse to whom she refers is none other than the God of the Christians." Hereupon the governor, changing his tone, told her that she should abandon that sect and its maxims altogether, or else not only lose the good fortune which now presented itself, but be exposed to infamy and the most cruel torments. He concluded by giving her four-and-twenty hours to consider whether, under these circumstances, she would obstinately continue to be a Christian. Agnes boldly replied that she required no time for deliberation, as she was already resolved to have no other spouse than Jesus Christ, and that neither torments nor death could frighten her, as she was most anxious to lay down her life for him.

The governor then thought to intimidate her by threatening to have her sent to an infamous place, to be there dishonored; but the saint replied: "My confidence is placed in Jesus Christ, my spouse, who is omnipotent —he will defend me from all outrage." Enraged at this answer, Symphronius ordered her to be handcuffed, and dragged in chains before the idols, that she might offer incense; but on arriving at the place, she made the sign of the cross, declaring that her Crucified Spouse alone should be adored. She was then led, by force, to

a house of prostitution; but if any approached her with an immodest intent, he became so overawed as not to be able to look at the saint. Only one rash young man, whom some suppose to have been Procopius, attempted to offer her any violence; but as Cardinal Orsi[1] here observes, the impure wretch soon experienced the jealousy with which the "Spouse of Virgins" defends them, for a flash of lightning struck him blind, and he fell as if dead upon the ground. While his companions were endeavoring to afford him some relief, and were already bewailing him as dead, the saint was requested to pray for him, and this she did; whereupon he instantly recovered, and again received his sight.

The governor, surprised at this miracle, was inclined to dismiss the holy virgin; but the idolatrous priests exclaimed that it was the effect of magic, and excited the people to demand that Agnes should be put to death as a witch. The governor, fearing a sedition if he should discharge her, and, on the other hand, being unwilling to put her to death, left the judgment of the case to his lieutenant, Aspasius, who being obliged to it by the populace, condemned her to be burned alive. The funeral pile was accordingly erected, the saint was placed upon it, and the fire enkindled; but the flames, respecting her person, divided themselves on either side, and consumed many of the idolaters who were assisting at the execution.

The priests and the people continued to cry out that it was the work of the devil, and obliged the lieutenant to send an executioner to behead her. The horror of such an execution caused even this minister of cruelty to turn pale, and, says St. Ambrose,[2] he trembled to give the stroke: but the saint animated him, saying: "Haste thee to destroy this my body, which could give pleasure

[1] *Istor. eccl.* l. 9, n. 42.

[2] *De Virginia.* l. 1.

to others, to the offending of my divine Spouse. Fear not to give me that death which shall be to me the commencement of eternal life." Having raised her eyes to heaven, and besought Jesus Christ to receive her soul, this tender virgin received the stroke of death, and went to receive from her Saviour the palm of her triumph.

As early as the time of Constantine the Great, a church was erected in honor of St. Agnes; and her festival is celebrated twice a year by the Church—on the 21st January, in honor of her earthly triumph; and on the 28th of the same month, in commemoration of her heavenly reward.[1]

[1] The martyrdom of St. Agnes took place, according to Ruinart, about the year 304. Her virginal body was religiously deposited in a place belonging to her parents. The following is what is contained in the Roman Breviary in her office of January 28: "One night when the parents of the blessed Agnes were watching at her grave, she appeared to them in company with a band of virgins, and said to them: 'Father and mother, weep not for me as though I were dead; for now these virgins and I live together in Him whose love was my whole life upon earth.' Some years afterwards, Constance, the daughter of the Emperor Constantine, being sick of an incurable ulcer, betook herself to the said grave, although she was mx yet a Christian, and as she lay by it and slept, she seemed to hear the voice of Agnes, saying to her; 'Constance, be of good courage; believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and he will make thee whole.' The princess, being healed, was baptized, along with many others of the emperor's family and household, and afterwards built over the grave of the blessed Agnes a church named in her honor."

Alban Butler or Godescard adds: "This church gives title to a Cardinal. Every year, on the feast of St. Agnes, the abbot of St. Peter's *ad Vincula* blesses in it, at High Mass, two lambs, which are thence carried to the Pope, by whom they are again blessed. After this they are sent to the nuns of St. Laurence's, in Panispcrna, or sometimes to the Capucinesses, who make of the wool of these lambs palliums, which the Pope blesses and sends to the archbishops and bishops who occupy orivileged sees. These palliums are emblems of meekness and spotless purity. St. Augustine says that the name Agnes signifies *lamb* in Latin, and *chaste* in Greek."

Dorn Gueranger, in his history of St. Cecilia, chapter 31, describes

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SS. SIMEON, ARCHBISHOP OF SELEUCIA,[1] USTHAZADES, AND PUSIKIUS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS.

April 2i.

Ecclesiastical history informs us that the faith of Jesus Christ was preached in Persia by the apostles themselves; and the number of Christians in this kingdom was consequently very considerable during the reign of Sapor, which was about the middle of the fourth century.[2] The Magians, or priests of the Persian religion, became alarmed at the spread of Christianity,

the labors undertaken in 1605 to discover the relics of St. Agnes. They were found under the main altar in a marble tomb in which they had been resting for a thousand years, with the relics of St. Emerantiana, her foster-sister. The precious relics of these two virgins were at once enclosed in a silver reliquary presented by Pope Paul V.—Ed.

[1] He is also styled Bishop of Ctesiphon, a city built by the Parthians, on the bank of the river Tigris, opposite to that upon which the ancient Seleucia, now Bagdad, stood. Some are of opinion that these ancient cities were separated only by the river, while others contend that they were three miles apart; Fleury makes the distance thirty. This last opinion seems improbable, as bishoprics were formerly very small; and we frequently find Seleucia and Ctesiphon spoken of as one archbishopric. The first general council of Nice is said to have made it the Metropolitan See of Persia, during the episcopate of St. Simeon

[2] The father of Sapor died before the birth of his son; and the Magians, that he might be born a king, performed the ceremony of his coronation upon the pregnant mother; so that the wicked life and bloody reign of this vainglorious tyrant began together in the year 310. But our author, in saying that the latter was about the middle of the fourth century, refers to that part of it which was rendered most remarkable by his third, and most cruel, persecution of the Christians.

and, together with the. Jews, induced Sapor to persecute the faithful.

St. Simeon was, at that time, Archbishop of Seleucia, and his zealous solicitude for his flock caused him to be regarded as the principal defender of the Christian faith. In order to effect his ruin, his enemies represented to Sapor that he was in continual correspondence with the Roman emperor, to whom, they said, he revealed the most important concerns of the state. Sapor lent a willing ear to these calumnies, and regarding Simeon as his enemy, resolved not only upon his death, but upon the total extermination of the Christians in his dominions. He began by confiscating their property; and finding that they bore this with patience, he ordered that the clergy who would not abjure Jesus Christ should be beheaded, and that all Christian churches should be levelled with the ground.

The holy bishop was arrested and brought before the tyrant; but, lest it should be thought that he was about to ask pardon for having preached the Christian religion, he did not comply with the Persian custom of prostration, although he had frequently done so on former occasions. Sapor, enraged at this omission, asked him why he refused to render him the homage to which his rank entitled him. The saint answered: "When I, on former occasions, appeared in thy presence, I was not led to deny the true God, and therefore refused not to comply with the usual ceremonies; but now I cannot do so, as being called upon to defend my God and my religion." The king exhorted him to adore the sun, declaring that great riches and honors would be the reward of his obedience; while his own death, and the extermination of the Christians, should inevitably be the consequence of his non-compliance. The saint, having given the most decided refusal, was sent to

prison in the hope that he would be thus induced to change his resolution.

While St. Simeon was being led to prison, an aged eunuch, named Usthazades, who was the lord chamberlain, prostrated himself before him. But the holy prelate, despising this mark of veneration, and turning his face from the eunuch, reprimanded him, because that, being a Christian, he had adored the sun. The apostate wept bitterly at this rebuke, and throwing off his white robes, dressed himself in mourning. Thus clothed he sat at the palace gate, and, with many tears, frequently exclaimed: "Wretch that I am ! If Simeon, my friend, treats me thus harshly for my fault, and turns away his face from me, what am I to expect from that God whom I have denied?"

Sapor, being informed of the affliction of the eunuch, sent for him, and inquired whether any calamity had befallen him. The other replied: "Ah ! would to God that all calamities had befallen me, and not that which is the cause of my grief ! I weep because I did not die long ago, but live to behold that sun, which, to please thee, I have adored. I deserve a double death—one for having betrayed Jesus Christ, and another for having deceived thee." He then protested, in the most solemn manner, that he would never, henceforward, deny his God. The king became infuriated at these words, and believing that the Christians had turned his head, swore that he would put them all to death ; entertaining, however, some compassion for the poor old man, he did all he could to gain him over. Usthazades, notwithstanding, continued to protest that he never again would be so foofish as to give to creatures the honor due to the Creator ; and Sapor, finding that his constancy was invincible, ordered him to be beheaded.

While he was being led to execution, he told another eunuch, his friend, to request of Sapor, that, in consid-

eration of his past services, he would order him to be preceded by a crier, who would proclaim to the people that Usthazades had not been condemned for any crime, but merely for being a Christian, and having refused to abandon his God.[1] Sapor the more willingly acceded to his wish, as he was anxious to terrify the Christians by showing them that he would not tolerate the profession of their religion, even in an old man who had served him so faithfully.

The king then turned his thoughts toward St. Simeon and again endeavored to gain him over; but seeing that all his arts were ineffectual, he commanded him to be beheaded. As a last resource, however, he ordered the heads of one hundred Christians to be first struck off in presence of the saint, who, far from being intimidated, exhorted the sufferers to constancy, by telling them how glorious was their lot in acquiring the rewards of eternal life by dying for their Saviour. After the martyrdom of these hundred Christians the holy bishop was beheaded on Good Friday, and thus united his death to that of Jesus Christ.

Together with the bishop were beheaded two venerable priests of his church, Ananias and Abdechalas. Pusicius, the prefect of the king's workmen, seeing that Ananias, in preparing to receive the stroke, was trembling, exclaimed: "Father, shut thy eyes for one moment, and thou shalt instantly see the light of Christ." These words proclaimed Pusicius to be a Christian; he was accordingly arrested and brought before the king, whom he upbraided with his cruelty towards the Christians. Sapor, enraged at his freedom of speech, caused him to be put to death in a strange and most cruel man-

[1] The happy penitent was too much afflicted at his apostasy to be jblicitous for his honor, and seems to have made this request in order that the real cause of his death, being made public, the scp .^al which he had given might be repaired.—Ed.

ner—his tongue was pulled out, not from his mouth, but through an incision made in his neck. His virgin daughter, who had consecrated herself to God, was also arrested and put to death.

All these holy martyrs died about the year 344. Their martyrdom is related by Sozomen, a contemporaneous author, who is cited by Ruinart.

CHAPTER XL.

SS. LUCIUS, MONTANUS, FLAVIAN, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, DISCIPLES OF ST. CYPRIAN.

February 24.

The account of the martyrdom of these saints is extracted partly from a letter which they wrote, and partly from the testimony of an eye-witness; they suffered in Africa, in the year 158, in the persecution of the Emperor Valerian.

After the death of Galerius Maximus, Proconsul of Africa, the governor, who held the command until the appointment of his successor, gave an order for the arrest of Lucius, Montanus, Flavian, Julian, Victorious, Primolus, Rhenus, and Donatian: they were all Christians and disciples of St. Cyprian, but Primolus and Donatian were as yet catechumens. The letter written hy these martyrs is long; the following is an extract: "As soon as we were arrested, we were given in custody to the officers of the quarter, and thence led to prison, by the horror and stench of which we were not dismayed, but rather rejoiced, as though we had entered heaven; we were here visited by many of our Christian brethren,

who by their discourse made us forget the privations we had suffered. We were then brought before the governor, who, without examining us, remanded us to prison, where we suffered much from hunger and thirst, since a cup of cold water was denied even to the sick; but the Lord failed not to console us with heavenly nourishment in this tribulation."

The martyrs were detained in prison many months, during which two of them died—one shortly after his baptism, the other before he had received it, but after he had confessed Jesus Christ. In this persecution lay persons were not condemned to death; and when the martyrs were again brought before the governor, the relatives and friends of Flavian, in order to save bis life, protested that he was not a deacon, as he had declared himself to be ; he was therefore sent back to prison, but the others were condemned to die, and walked cheerfully to the place of execution. Lucius, being unwell, and fearing that he might be oppressed by the crowd, and so lose the honor of shedding his blood for Jesus Christ in company with the rest, requested to be led forwaro before the others. Some of the crowd said to him: "Lucius, remember us;" but he humbly replied: "Do you rather remember me."

Montanus, just before his martyrdom, frequently repeated with a loud voice: " He that sacrificed) to any but the true God, shall be destroyed by the Lord." He also exhorted the heretics to return to the Church, telling them that the many martyrs who had laid down their lives in testimony of her was a sufficient proof of the truth of her doctrines. He besought sinners to return to God by repentance, and exhorted all to constancy in the faith, and a strict observance of the divine commandments. Before receiving the stroke of death, he raised his bands to heaven, and prayed that Flavian might follow him after three days; and, as if certain of

being heard, he tore the kerchief with which his eyes were to be bound in two parts, and desiring them to keep one half for Flavian, he terminated his martyrdom.

Meanwhile Flavian, in prison, lamented that he had been separated from those who had the happiness to lay clown their lives for Jesus Christ; but he endeavored to console himself and his mother, who also grieved at this disappointment, by adverting to the necessity of conformity to the will of God. He felt great confidence in the prayer of Montanus, whose presentiment was fulfilled; for, on the third day, he was again summoned to the presence of the governor. Those who were conducting him said it was a folly to prefer death to life, and exhorted him to sacrifice to the gods ; but he replied that, even if there were no obligation of worshipping the God who created us, nor rewards promised to our fidelity, it nevertheless would be unworthy human reason to adore gods of wood and stone. The governor asked him why he had said he was a deacon, when such was not the case. The saint answered, that he had confessed the truth ; and the people, who wished to save him by this means, demanded that he should be tortured till he would confess the fact; the governor, however, condemned him to death.

While he was being led to the place of execution, there fell a great deal of rain, and the martyr was led into a house, where he had an opportunity to speak with the Christians who followed him. Having arrived at the scene of his martyrdom, he spoke to the faithful on the necessity of brotherly love, and having finished his discourse, he bound his eyes with that half of the kerchief which had been left him by Montanus, and kneeling down in prayer, received the stroke which consummated his martyrdom.

CHAPTER XLI.

SS. EPIPODIUS AND ALEXANDER OF LYONS.

April 22.

Both these saints were of noble family. Epipodius was a native of Lyons, and Alexander a Grecian by birth. From their first studies together in the same school, they contracted the strictest friendship, which was strengthened and increased by the mutual practice of those Christian virtues in which they had been reared by their parents. These two saints were in the flower of their age, and both unmarried, when the persecution of Marcus Aurelius was raging, particularly at Lyons, where the slaughter of the faithful was so great, that the pagans thought they had succeeded in extinguishing the Christian religion there.

Epipodius and Alexander were betrayed by a servant, and denounced as Christians to the governor, who ordered them to be arrested. Having heard of this order, they fled from the city, in compliance with the Gospel counsel, and having taken refuge in the cottage of a poor Christian widow, remained concealed there for some time. They were, however, discovered, and most unexpectedly arrested, and after three days brought before the governor, to whom they acknowledged that they were Christians. The pagans loudly demanded their death, whereupon the governor said: "Then the temerity of the Christians in despising the gods and the edicts of the emperor still continues. We have put to death numbers of these rash people, leaving their bodies unburied, and still there are found some to speak of Christi What audacity is this of yours to profess a religion for-

bidden by the emperor? But you shall shortly pay the penalty."

He sent Alexander to prison, and commenced tampering with Epipodius, who, he thought, might be more easily perverted, as he was the younger of the two; he first spoke to him with kindness, saying: "It is a pity that thou, who art a young man, shouldst be anxious to perish, through perseverance in the religion of this false sect. We adore the gods, who are adored by all the people and their rulers, and the worship which we render them allows us to lead a life of pleasure. But ye, Christians, adore a crucified man, who loves to see his followers afflicted with penance, and debarred from every enjoyment. What benefits can he bestow on his followers, who could not save himself from the death to which the Jews condemned him? Abandon, my son, this sect, and enjoy the pleasures which are permitted to us."

Epipodius answered: "The pity which thou dost manifest in my regard is in reality a cruelty; since, to live as pagans live, is productive of eternal death; while, on the contrary, to die for Jesus Christ is the greatest of all blessings. Thou knowest that Christ hath died upon a cross, but knowest not that he hath risen again, being both God and man, and that he hath thus opened to his followers the gates of eternal life, to lead them thither from this short and miserable existence, that they may reign with him in heaven everlastingly. Thou understandest not the truth of the Christian faith, but mayest well understand that the pleasures of the body cannot satisfy souls that have been created by God for an immortality. We deny to our bodies the pleasures of this life to save the soul eternally. Thou believest that existence terminates with this life; while we, on the contrary, are assured that the termination of this present miserable existence is only the beginning of a happy state of being that knows no end."

The governor, although somewhat moved by this discourse, gave way to the impulse of anger, and ordered the executioners to strike the saint upon the mouth: but the saint, bleeding from the blows, courageously said: "I confess that Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is the true and only God; and it is but reasonable that I should resign my soul to him who has created and redeemed me. I do not thereby lose my life, but change it for a better one. It matters little in what manner my body may be destroyed, so that my soul return to him that gave it."

The governor ordered him to be stretched upon the rack, and two executioners to tear his sides with iron hooks. The people tumultuously exclaimed that the saint should be delivered up to them, that they might stone him; and the governor, fearing that his authority might be set at nought by their seizing on the prisoner, ordered his head to be immediately struck off, and the holy youth thus hastened to the enjoyment of the crown.

Upon the death of St. Epipodius, the governor summoned his companion, Alexander, before him, and said: 'It is yet in thy power to avoid the death to which others have been consigned. I imagine that thou art the only Christian remaining; if, therefore, thou art desirous to save thy life, thou must honor and sacrifice to our gods." Alexander, encouraged by the martyrdom of his companion, answered: "I thank my God that the mention of the deaths of my brethren only confirms my desire of imitating their example. Dost thou imagine that their souls have died with their bodies? No; they have gone to the enjoyment of heaven. Thou art deceived, thinking that thou canst extinguish the Christian faith, which hath been so established by God, that it is propagated by the death of the faithful. Those whom thou believest to have killed are now in the en-

joyment of heaven, which they shall continue to enjoy for all eternity; while, on the contrary, thou and the objects of thy adoration shall be cast into the fire of hell, to suffer for all eternity. I am a Christian, like my brother Epipodius, who is now reigning in heaven. Do therefore, to my body as it pleaseth thee; for my soul shall be received by that God who created it."

The governor, infuriated at these words, ordered three executioners to scourge the saint most cruelly, while he, imploring the divine assistance, continued to suffer with fortitude. The governor, perceiving that this protracted butchery of the saint's body made no impression upon his constancy, asked him if he Avould still continue obstinate. Alexander answered: "I shall never change my resolution, because it is in the keeping of a God who is omnipotent, unlike thy gods, who are devils."

The governor said: "The Christians are so mad as to believe that they can acquire glory by sufferings. This man, therefore, shall be punished as he deserves." He then ordered the saint to be crucified; but his body had been so lacerated, that his entrails were visible, and he was but a short time fastened to the cross when he consummated his martyrdom, and went to receive the reward of so much suffering.

The triumph of these two saints is believed to have taken place in the month of April, in the year 178. The Christians privately carried off their bodies, and buried them upon a little hill, which afterwards became celebrated; as many miraculous cures were there wrought during the pestilence which afflicted the city of Lyons, shortly after the death of these saints. The author of their acts attests these miracles; they are related by Ruinart.[1]

[1] Alban Butler adds that St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, wrote the panegyric of these saints, in which he says that the dust of their tomb

CHAPTER XLII.

ST. LEO OF PATARA.

February 18.

At Patara, in Lycia, a great festival was once being celebrated in honor of a certain idol, at which a great concourse assembled ; some having gone willingly, and many through fear, as an edict had been published to that effect. But St. Leo, who was a good Christian, departed from the city, and went to perform his devotions before the relics of St. Paregorius, who had died for the faith some short time previously. Upon his return home, St. Paregorius appeared to him in a vision, standing at the opposite side of a torrent, and inviting him to pass over.

St. Leo hence conceived a great hope that he would be honored with martyrdom ; and going, some days after, to make a second visit to the tomb of St. Paregorius, he passed by the temple of Fortune, where many lanterns burned before the idol. Impelled by a special impulse of the Holy Ghost, he entered the temple and threw down the lights : but the idolaters, enraged at the insult offered to their idol, raised such a clamor, that the governor heard of the affair, and ordered that the saint should be brought before him.

was distributed over the whole country for the benefit of the sick. The virtue this dust is also attested by St. Gregory of Tours. He says c-nai heir bodies in the sixth century iay deposited with the body of St. trenæus, under the altar of the Church of St. John, that at present bears the name of St. Irenæus. The relics of St. Epipodius and St. Alexander were discovered and solemnly translated ia 1410.—Ed.

When Leo made his appearance, the governor rebuked him for the outrage he had committed against the gods, in violation of the commands of the sovereign ; but the saint, animated with holy zeal, replied : "Thou speakest to me of the gods, as if there were many : there is but one God, and Jesus Christ is his only begotten Son. Since statues of stone and wood are devoid of sense and feeling, of what use can lanterns be to them? If thou hadst the knowledge of the true God, thou wouldst not worship these false deities. Oh, do abandon this vain superstition, and adore our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !"

The governor said : "Thou dost then exhort me to become a Christian ? Better it were for thee to conform to the general practice, lest thy rashness be punished as it deserves." The saint with increased ardor replied : "I see about me a multitude of those who, blindly persevering in error, despise the true God ; but I am a Christian notwithstanding, and follow the instructions of the apostles. If this deserve chastisement, award it ; for I am determined to suffer every torture, rather than become the slave of the devil. Others may do as they please, since they are solicitous merely for the present, and are reckless of the future life, which is to be obtained only by sufferings. The Scripture tells us that *narrow is the way which leadeth to life."* [1]

The governor observed : "Since, then, the way of the Christians is narrow; exchange it for ours, which is wide and commodious." Leo answered: "I have said that the way is narrow, because it is one of affliction, and of persecutions suffered for justice sake ; but it is wide enough for those who walk therein, because their faith, and the hope of an eternal reward, make it so to them. The love of virtue maketh that easy which to thee seem-

[1] *Matt,* vii. 14.

eth difficult. On the contrary, the road of vice is in reality narrow, and leads to an eternal precipice."

This discourse was most unpalatable to the pagans, who accordingly exclaimed that the impious man, who had spoken against their religion, should be silenced. The governor then asked St. Leo whether he would sacrifice; and being answered that his compliance was totally impossible, he ordered him to be scourged. Although this command was most cruelly executed, the saint suffered without a groan; whereupon the governor threatened still greater torments, but the saint answered: "I know not these gods, and will never sacrifice to them." "At least," said the governor, "say that our gods are great, and I will dismiss thee, for I have compassion upon thy old age." The saint replied: "They are great for the destruction of those souls that believe in them." The governor, infuriated at this reply, said: "I will order thee to be dragged over stones till thou art torn to pieces." The saint replied: "I shall welcome any kind of death that procures me the kingdom of heaven, and that blessed life which I shall enjoy in company with the saints, upon my departure from this world."

The tyrant continued to importune him to sacrifice, or at least to acknowledge that the gods could save him from death. The saint replied: "Thou art very weak, since thou dost nothing but threaten, without putting thy threats into execution." The populace, being enraged at this reply, obliged the judge to condemn the saint to be tied by the feet and dragged through a torrent.

St. Leo finding'himself about to obtain the accomplishment of his desire to die for Jesus Christ, raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed after the following manner: "I thank Thee, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for granting me the grace to follow Thy servant

Paregorius. I praise Thee, because Thou hast enabled me, by martyrdom, to cancel my past sins. I cornmend my soul to the care of Thy holy angels, that it may be saved from the perdition prepared for the wicked. I beseech Thee, by that which it is my blessed lot to suffer, to have mercy on those who are thecause thereof; and since Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, grant them the grace to recognize Thee as the Lord of the universe. May all that which I suffer in the name of Jesus Christ thy Son redound to Thy glory forever and ever. Amen." As soon as he pronounced the word *Amen,* he rendered up his soul to God, and went to enjoy the crown to which St. Paregorius had invited him.

The executioners cast the body into a deep pit, in order to break it to pieces; but it was taken thence and found entire, with only a few slight bruises, and the face appeared comely and smiling.[1]

CHAPTER XLIII.

ST. BASIL OF ANCYRA, PRIEST.

March 22.

St. Basil was a priest of Ancyra, in Galatia, who during the reign of Constantius bravely defended the divinity of the Son of God against the Arians, and converted many from that heresy. Upon the death of Constantius, Julian the Apostate succeeded to the empire, and used

[1] The names of St. Paregorius and St. Leo, martyred at Patara, are not found in the Roman martyrology; but the Bollandists and Ruinart give their acts as trustworthy, and the Greeks celebrate their feast on February 18. As for the time of their martyrdom, it is unknown; several think that it took place in the third century.—Ed.

all his energies for the re-establishment of idolatry, which at this time had been almost annihilated. St. Basil, on the other hand, struggled with all his might against this impious project, and ran through the entire city of Ancyra, exhorting the Christians to preserve themselves from apostasy, and to despise the promises of Julian, whom, he said, God would quickly remove. By this conduct he brought upon himself the hatred of the idolaters, who united with the Arians in persecuting him; but the saint was not to be deterred from defending the faith of Jesus Christ.

One day while some of the Gentiles were sacrificing to the gods, he prayed aloud that the Lord might confound them, in order that no Christians should be seduced by their example. The idolaters, upon hearing this prayer, became infuriated, and one of them, named Macarius, laying violent hands upon him, said: "Who art thou that darest to disturb the people, and to preach against the worship of the gods?" Basil replied: "Not I, but the God of Heaven, with his invincible power, will destroy your false religion." The heathens, more infuriated than ever, dragged him before Saturninus, the governor of the province, saying: "This man has been guilty of sedition, and threatens to overturn the altars of the gods."

Saturninus, turning to him, said: "Who art thou that showest so much rashness?" Basil answered: "I am a Christian, and glory in being so." "If then thou art a Christian," said Saturninus, "why dost thou not act like a Christian?" Basil: "Thou art right; a Christian ought to appear so in all his actions." Saturninus: "Why hast thou raised the people and blasphemed the emperor as the follower of a false religion?" Basil: "I blaspheme not the emperor nor his religion; but I say that in heaven there is a Ruler whom the Christians adore as the only true God, and who can in one mo-

ment destroy your false worship." Saturninus : " What canst thou say against the religion of the emperor?" Basil was about to reply, but Saturninus interrupted him, saying: "All reply is useless ; thou must obey the emperor." Basil : "I never yet have failed to obey the Emperor of Heaven." Saturninus: "Who is this Emperor of Heaven?" Basil: "He that dwelieth in heaven and beholdeth all things ; while your emperor commands only upon earth, and is a man like the rest, who is shortly about to fall into the hands of the Great King."

The governor, irritated at this answer, ordered that the saint should be suspended, and torn with iron hooks: but while Basil was returning thanks to God, he asked him whether he would sacrifice. The saint replied : "I have placed all my confidence in the King of kings ; nor is it in the power of man to change me." The tyrant, perceiving that the executioners had fatigued themselves, sent him to prison ; and one Felix, a bad Christian, who met him b\r the way, advised him to obey the emperor, but our saint answered: "Depart from me, O impious wretch ! enveloped as thou art in the darkness of sin, how canst thou See the light ?"

The Emperor Julian was at this time at Pessinunte, celebrating the festival of the goddess Cybele, who was said to be the mother of the gods. Here Saturninus informed him of what had taken place regarding Basil. The apostate hearing that he possessed great influence, sent two other apostates, Elpidius and Pegasus, to gain him over. When the latter went to the prison to speak to him, the saint said : "Traitor! why bast thou renounced Jesus Christ and thy hopes of salvation ? After having been cleansed in the waters of baptism, how couldst thou stain thyself with idolatry ?— after having been fed with the flesh of Jesus Christ, how canst thou sit at a feast of demons? Thou wert the

disciple of truth, and art now become a master of perdition, to the eternal loss of thy own soul. What wilt thou do when the Lord shall come to judge thee ?" Then raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed : "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to deliver me from the snares of the devil." Pegasus, covered with confusion, related the affair to Elpidius and they both proceeded to inform the governor, who again caused Basil to be put to torture. When the saint was placed upon the rack, he said : "Impious tyrant, thou mayst exercise all thy cruelty, but so long as Jesus Christ is with me, I never will change."

The emperor, having arrived at Ancyra, summoned the martyr before him, and inquired his name. The saint replied: " I am a Christian. This is my principal name; but I am generally called Basil. Now, if I shall have preserved the name of a Christian without blemish, Jesus Christ will reward me, on the day of judgment, with an eternal glory." Julian: " Do not thus miserably deceive thyself, continuing to believe in him that was pul to death under Pontius Pilate." Basil: " No, emperor; I am not deceived, but thou hast deceived thyself, who by thy apostasy hast forfeited thy right to heaven. I continue to believe in Jesus Christ, whom thou hast renounced, although he placed thee upon a throne; he will, however, quickly hurl thee thence, that thou mayest know the power of the God whom thou hast despised." Julian: "Madman, thou art raving; it shall not befall me as thou wouldst." Basil: "Thou hast forgotten Jesus Christ, and he shall never again remember thee in his mercy. He that is the Emperor of all shall despoil thee of the authority thou hast, and cause thee to expire in agony; nor shall thy body find burial." This prediction was shortly afterwards fulfilled.

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Julian, infuriated at the martyr's speech, said: " I had designed to discharge thee unmolested; but, since thy

temerity hath gone so far as to reproach me, I now command that there be torn, every day, from off thy body, seven pieces of flesh." This barbarous command was quickly put into execution by the Count Frumentinus, to whom the charge was given. Our saint endured it with great fortitude; and, when he had been entirely lacerated, he desired to speak with the emperor. The count, believing that he was induced by the torture to sacrifice to the gods, made known his desire to Julian, who commanded him to be brought to the temple of Esculapius. Upon being presented to the emperor in the temple, the saint said: " Where, sir, are the persons who are wont to accompany thee? Have they not foretold to thee the motive of this my visit ?" Julian: " I suppose thou hast returned to thy senses, and art willing to adore the majesty of the gods." Basil: " Not so; I have come to make thee know that thy gods are but blind and deaf statues, the worshipping of which is punished in hell." Then taking a piece of his torn flesh, he cast it in the emperor's face, saying: "Take this, O Julian, since such food pleaseth thee. To me death is a gain, and Jesus is my life and my strength; in him I believe, and for his sake I am willing to suffer."

The Christians looked with satisfaction upon the constancy of Basil, and the glorious testimony he had given to the faith; but equal to their joy was the fury of Frumentinus at his disappointment. He therefore ordered the executioners to tear the saint with irons, until his bones and bowels should be laid bare. During the infliction of this sentence the holy martyr prayed thus:

Be Thou forever blessed, O Lord, who giveth strength unto the weak that put their trust in Thee. Mercifully vouchsafe to look upon me, and grant me the grace faithfully to consummate my sacrifice, that I may be made worthy of thy eternal kingdom."

On the following day the emperor departed from An

cyra without granting an audience to Frumentinus, who, having summoned Basil before him, exclaimed: "0! thou most rash and obdurate of mortals! wilt thou at last yield to the emperor, or terminate thy days amid the most excruciating torture?" Basil replied: "Dost thou not recollect to what state thou didst reduce my body yesterday, when its mangled appearance drew tears from all who beheld it? Now it hath pleased Jesus Christ to heal me, as thou seest. Make this known to thy emperor, in order that he may understand the power of that God whom he hath abandoned to become the slave of the devil; but God also will abandon him, and he shall die in hissins." Frumentinus replied: "Thou art mad; but if thou wilt not sacrifice, I shall cause thy entire body to be pierced with red-hot spikes." The saint answered: "I have not been afraid, as thou knowest, of the threats of the emperor; think now whether thy words can strike me with terror."

Although Frumentinus was aware that the constancy of Basil was not to be overcome, he nevertheless caused the irons to be heated, and the saint's shoulders to be pierced through. During this most agonizing torture, the saint prayed thus: "I thank Thee, O Lord, my God, who hast delivered my soul from hell. Preserve Thy blessed spirit within me, in order that, having overcome these torments, I may offer to Thee the sacrifice of my life, and become an heir to everlasting bliss, through the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whose merits I beseech Thee to receive my soul in peace, since I have continued to the end to confess Thy name, who livest and reignest, world without end.—Amen." Having finished this prayer, the saint, as though falling into a sweet sleep, in the midst of his tortures placidly rendered his soul to God, on the 28th of June, in the year 362. The Acts of his martyrdom are found in Ruinart.

CHAPTER XLIV.

SS. POTHINUS, BISHOP OF LYONS; SANCTUS, DEACON; ALEXANDER, PHYSICIAN; VETTIUS EPAGATHUS, MATURUS, ATTALUS OF PERGAMUS, BIBLIS, BLANDINA, AND THEIR COMPANIONS.

June 2.

While the Emperor Marcus Aurelius was carrying on the war against the Quadi and other German tribes, he was on one occasion very much terrified at the probability of his entire army perishing from thirst. But the Christian soldiers who were scattered among the ranks, having fervently prayed for rain, it descended in such quantities as to enable all the troops to slake their thirst. The enemy was at this time attacking the Romans with great advantage, when thunderbolts and heavy hail disconcerted their ranks, and obliged them to fly. The emperor, justly attributing this miracle to the power of the God of the Christians, prohibited, in the year 174, under pain of death, that any one should accuse them for their religion. After three years, however, by popular commotion, the idolaters raised a per. secution against the Christians, which raged mos\. furiously at Lyons and Vienne, and the adjacent towns.

But the more the faithful were persecuted, the more they experienced the protection of the Almighty, who strengthened them to suffer with heroic patience the maltreatment they received from the populace or the magistrates. Several were arrested and brought before the president, who treated them with such cruelty, that a young nobleman, named Vettius Epagathus, fired with the Spirit of God, exclaimed that the Christians

had been guilty of no crime, and that they were, therefore, most unjustly punished. The president asked him who he was. Vettius replied : " I am a Christian." The president then ordered that all the Christians in Lyons and Vienne should be imprisoned. Some persons came forward to accuse the Christians of having committed the most execrable impurities in their assemblies, and also having eaten children there. Hereupon the magistrates prepared the most atrocious torments, in order to oblige the faithful to confess these crimes, and to abandon the faith of Jesus Christ.

Among others, they put to torture a certain deacon named Sanctus, who, being asked his name and the place of his birth, would give no other answer than—"I am a Christian." They applied red-hot plates of brass to the tenderest parts of his body ; but, although from his head to his feet he might be said to be one wound, he was so strengthened by divine grace as to remain constant in the profession of his faith. When he became quite shrivelled and stooped by reason of his torments, they sent him back to prison ; and when, a few days afterwards, they brought him out to renew his tortures, they found that the second became the remedy of the first affliction, for the saint had perfectly recovered.

In this persecution, many unhappily renounced Jesus Christ, amongst whom was a woman named Biblis ; she was, notwithstanding her apostasy, put to the torture, in order to make her confess the crimes with which the Christians had been charged. But her sufferings operated upon her in a very different manner : she began to reflect how insupportable must be the torments of hell, which she should suffer, were she to die in her sin. Instead, therefore of accusing the Christians, she exclaimed : " How is it possible that those who abstain even from the blood of animals could be induced to feed upon their own children ?" Biblis then protested

that she was a Christian, and wished to die for her faith; and was thus ranked among the martyrs.

At this lime St. Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons, was ninety years of age, and so very weak that he could scarcely draw his breath; but proportionate to his weakness was his desire to lay down his life for Jesus Christ, and to mingle his blood with that of his flock, which was being spilt. When the soldiers carried him before the president, and he had been asked, wiio was the God of Christians, the holy prelate replied: "When thou art worthy, thou shall know him." The idolaters no sooner heard this answer than they set upon the aged bishop like a set of wild beasts, and so inhumanly maltreated him with kicks and blows, that, being led to prison, he expired after two days.

The prisons were filled with Christians, who were tortured in every possible way; and it was easy to distinguish those who had prepared themselves for the great struggle by a life of sanctity and mortification, from those whose faith became weak by reason of their tepid and effeminate lives. The former were constant in confessing the name of Jesus Christ, and appeared joyous and confident; but the others basely abandoned their faith, and, stung with remorse, appeared sorrowful and confused, while they were despised by the very Pagans themselves. Many of these good Christians died in prison, being overcome by the damp and loathsomeness of the place, as well as hunger and the other sufferings.

Others were reserved by God to expire publicly amid tortures. Among the latter were Maturus, and Sanctus the deacon, who, besides the torments which they had already endured, were, at the request of the populace, placed sitting in a red-hot iron chair—a cruelty that one would think could be invented only by demons. The noisome smell which proceeded from their burning

flesh, became offensive to their persecutors, who, accordingly, cut their throats ; thus did these two saints obtain the victory of their prolonged martyrdom.

The multitude next called for the death of Attalus of Pergamus, who was known by all to be a zealous Christian ; but the governor, hearing that he was a Roman citizen, remanded him to prison, until a decision should arrive from the emperor. At that time there was also at Lyons a certain Christian named Alexander, a physician by profession, and a native of Phrygia, who, being near the governor during the interrogation of some Christians, made signs to them with his head and his eyes to exhort them to remain steadfast in the faith. The pagans accused him of this, and the governor, hearing from himself that he was a Christian, sent him also to prison. On the following day he was brought out, together with Attalus ; they were worried by wild beasts, and finally despatched by the swords of the exe-

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cutioners.

The scene of blood was terminated by the martyrdom of St. Blandina, whose glorious triumph is worthy of special commemoration. She was a slave, and a very tender virgin, of such a delicate constitution, that her mistress, who was an excellent Christian lady, entertained very great fears that she would be unequal to the tortures, and deny the faith ; but no one could evince more courage than Blandina, or greater patience in enduring the various tortures by which her constancy was tried. The executioners employed an entire day in tormenting her, relieving one another at intervals ; and they were astonished to find that a young, a delicate, and sickly creature could survive so many tortures. She was first scourged, next torn with iron hooks until her entrails appeared, and then placed in a red-hot iron chair; yet did she make no complaint, and was only heard to say : " I am a Christian, and among Christians

the name of sin is unknown." She was afterwards wrapped in a net and exposed to a wild bull, who tossed her in the air for a considerable time. At last the sainted heroine had her throat cut, and thus consummated her sacrifice, while the pagans themselves confessed that no woman had ever been known to endure so horrid tortures with so much constancy.

The bodies of all these martyrs were burned, and the ashes thrown into the river Rhone. Their acts were written by some of the faithful of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne, who were witnesses of their triumph, and perhaps the companions of some of their sufferings. The strength evinced by these martyrs, in enduring these cruel and most bitter tortures with so much constancy, proves to us that the souls who really love Jesus Christ, and are dedicated to his service, can easily overcome, by the assistance of his grace, whatever tribulations we are doomed to suffer in this life.

CHAPTER XLV.

ST. ALBAN, FIRST MARTYR OF GREAT BRITAIN.

June 22.

St. Alban was an Englishman, and a pagan by birth. During the persecution of Diocletian, he fortunately received into his house a holy ecclesiastic, who was flying from the persecutors. Alban was greatly edified by the saintly life of his guest, who was almost continually employed in prayer, was exceedingly parsimonious in the use of food, and was remarkable for his humility and blandness of manners. Knowing him to be a Christian, our saint begged to be instructed in the religion; and the clergyman so forcibly showed him the extravagances of idolatry, and the truth of the doctrines of

Jesus Christ, that Alban, illumined by divine grace, embraced the Christian faith.

It was discovered after some time that the ecclesiastic, after whom search was being made, lay concealed in Alban's house, whereupon the governor sent a party of soldiers to seize him; but Alban, upon their approach, put on the habit of the clergyman, and enabled him to effect his escape. Our saint was accordingly arrested and brought before the governor, who was engaged, at the time, in offering sacrifice to his gods. Seeing Alban, with whom he had been acquainted, in that strange dress, and judging that he had become a Christian, he threatened that if the saint would not abandon the faith, he would cause him to suffer all the torments that had been prepared for him whose habit he had assumed. The saint replied that he never would abandon that faith which he had fortunately discovered to be the only true one. The governor then caused him to be cruelly scourged; but Alban suffered this torture, and many others that followed it, with such joy, that the governor, despairing of being able to change his resolve, condemned him to be beheaded.

The saint proceeded to the place of execution, as though it were to a banquet; but having arrived at the bank of the river, which should be crossed in order to reach the destined place, such a multitude had assembled, that it was considered impossible to pass the bridge before evening. Hereupon the saint, anxious to give his life for Jesus Christ, prayed to the Lord, and the waters, dividing themselves on either side, left a dry passage to the opposite bank. At the sight of this miracle the executioner was converted, and happily obtained the crown of martyrdom, together with St. Alban.[1]

[1] Later on a magnificent church was at first erected in this place that became famous for its great number of miracles; there a very celebrated monastery was built, and finally a city under the name of St Alban, between Birmingham and London.—Ed.

CHAPTER XLVI.

ST. PETER OF LAMPSACUS.

May 15.

During the persecution of Decius, at Lampsacus, a city near the Hellespont, a young man named Peler was brought before the proconsul, and having confessed himself a Christian, was commanded to sacrifice to the great goddess, Venus. Peter replied: "I wonder much how thou canst expect me to sacrifice to a woman, whose shameful impurities it were immodest even to mention. Sacrifice should be offered to the true God alone.*" At this answer the tyrant caused him to be bound to a wheel, that, revolving, by certain pieces of wood appropriately placed, caused a complete and gradual fracture of his bones. After this torture, the saint, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed: "I thank Thee, my jesus, because that Thou makest me worthy to suffer for Thy sake." The proconsul, perceiving his constancy, commanded him to be beheaded.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ST. CYRIL, THE CHILD.

May 29.

St. Cyril was born at Cæsarea, and, while yet a child, became a Christian, in consequence of which he was

* Dom Ruinart gives the Acts of this martyr with those of Saints Andrew, Paul, and Dionysia, or Denysa, whose triumph has been already related at page 116.—Ed.

maltreated, and finally turned out of doors by his idolatrous father. Information to this effect having been given to the judge, he caused Cyril to be brought before him; and, being told that the child frequently invoked the name of Jesus, he promised him that he would effect a reconciliation with his father, on condition that he would never more pronounce that name. The holy child replied: "I am content to be turned out of my father's house, because I shall receive a more spacious mansion in heaven; nor do I fear death, because by it I shall acquire a better life." The judge, in order to frighten him, caused him to be bound and led, as it were, to the death, but gave private orders to the executioner not to injure him. He was accordingly brought before a great fire, and threatened to be thrown in; but, being most willing to lay down his life, he was brought back to the judge, who said to him: "My child, thou hast seen the fire; cease, then, to be a Christian, that thou mayest return to thy father's house, and inherit thy estates." The saint replied: "I fear neither fire nor the sword; but I am desirous to have a dwelling more magnificent, and riches more lasting than those of my father! God will receive me. Do thou hasten to put me to death, that I may quickly go to enjoy him."

The bystanders wept to hear the child speak thus; but he observed: "You should not weep, but rather rejoice, and encourage me to suffer, in order that I may attain to the possession of that house which I so ardently desire." Remaining constant in these sentiments, he joyfully suffered death.

The Acts of his martyrdom are found in Ruinart.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

SS. POTAMIENA, VIRGIN; MARCELLA, HER MOTHER; AND BASILIDES, SOLDIER.

June 28 and 30.

The martyrdom of St. Potamiena was most illustrious. This holy virgin was educated with great care in the fear of the Lord, by her pious mother Marcella; but being by condition a slave, and gifted by God with extraordinary beauty, her pagan master conceived towards her a shameful passion, which he frequently manifested, and was as often indignantly repulsed. The unchaste wretch accordingly had recourse to the prefect of Egypt, and promised him a large sum of money if he would compel the saint to yield to his wishes, beseeching him at the same time to put her to death as a Christian, in case she should prove inexorable.

The prefect forthwith summoned Potamiena to his presence ; and showing her all the apparatus of torture that had been prepared for her in case of refusal, he commanded her to obey her master. He used all his arts to induce her to comply ; but the saint expressed her horror of the iniquitous demand, and, upbraiding him with the infamy of urging such a request, she said: "How is it possible that there can be found a judge so unjust as to condemn me, because I will not satisfy the inordinate desires of a lewd person ?"

Mortified at the saint's constancv, and still more so by the rebuke, the prefect condemned her to a most cruel death. He ordered a caldron of pitch to be placed upon the fire, and when it commenced to boil, he commanded the holy virgin to be thrown in. The saint implored of him, since she had to suffer that death,

that she might not be thrown into the caldron at once, but let down into it by degrees, in order that she might suffer the more, and thus manifest her love towards her crucified Spouse. "Thou shalt see," she continued, "how much patience is given to his servants, by that Jesus Christ whom thou knowest not." Although the prefect admired the courageous request of the virgin, he nevertheless acceded to it, and gave orders accordingly.

The superintendence of the barbarous execution was entrusted to a soldier named Basilides, who, notwithstanding that he readily accepted the commission, was kind enough to drive back some lewd young men, who were so insolent as to insult the saint. Potamiena promised him that she would reward his kindness by praying to God for him after her death. She was then immersed in the caldron by such slow degrees that, as Cardinal Orsi writes, her martyrdom was protracted for a considerable time; nor did she expire until the boiling pitch reached her neck, when her pure soul went to enjoy the beatific vision of that God for whose love she had suffered so painful a death. Her triumph took place at Alexandria, about the year 210; when her pious mother also suffered the martyrdom of being burned alive.

Three days after her death, St. Potamiena appeared in glory to Basilides, and, placing a crown upon his head, said to him: "Know that I have prayed for thee to my God, whom I now enjoy; he will presently call thee to that glory of which I have already been made a participator." The event proved the vision to be real; for Basilides embraced the Christian faith, received baptism, and was beheaded by order of the prefect.

The Acts of St. Potamiena's martyrdom are found in Ruinart, and are mentioned also by Tillemont in his memoirs.

l *htor. ecd.* l. 5, n. gg.

CHAPTER XLIX.

SS. NICANDER AND MARCIAN, SOLDIERS,

June 17.

Both these saints belonged to the military profession, but in the reign of Diocletian, at the beginning of the fourth century, distressed at seeing the faithful persecuted, they left the army, renouncing even the money that was due for their services. According to the martyrology they retired to Venafro.[1] They were accused of being Christians, before the governor Maximus, who ordered them to sacrifice; but Nicander answered: "This order should be given only to those who are willing to obey it; now we are Christians, and cannot do so." Maximus: "But why have ye refused to receive your pay?" Nicander: "We cannot receive it, because the money of the impious is regarded by the servants of God as a contamination." Maximus: "Offer incense at least to the gods." Nicander: "How can a Christian abandon the worship of the true God, to adore stones and blocks? Or why should that honor be given to them which is due only to God?"

Daria, the wife of Nicander, was present at this interrogation, and. filled with the Spirit of God, said to her husband: "Far be it from thee, Nicander, to obey the governor, and renounce Jesus Christ. Remember that God to whom thou didst plight thy faith; he will be thy protector." Hereupon Maximus exclaimed: "Wicked woman! why wouldst thou procure the death of thy husband?" Daria: "That he may the sooner attain to eternal life." Maximus: "Say rather, that thou art

[1] At present a city in the province of Naples.

anxious to have another husband, and therefore dost desire his death." Daria: "If thou hast any such suspicion, and sufficient authority, cause me to be first put to deatli for Jesus Christ." Maximus replied that he had received no orders regarding women; nevertheless he sent her to prison.

Turning then to Nicander, the governor said: "Give no ear to the words of thy wife; she pleads for death, but I will give thee time to consider whether it behove thee to live or die." Nicander answered: "Consider the time as already past. I have deliberated upon the matter, and am resolved to save myself." Maximus, believing that the saint meant to save his life by offering sacrifice, exclaimed: "Praise be to God."

The words were repeated by the saint, and the governor was rejoicing over his imaginary victory, when he heard Nicander continue his prayer aloud; which was, that God would deliver him from the contamination of this world. Astonished at the supposed change, the governor exclaimed: "How is this? Just now thou wert anxious to live, and at present dost pray for death!" Nicander answered: "No; I wish not to die, but to live forever; therefore it is that I despise this life of which thou speakest. Upon my body thou mayest exercise what power thou hast. I am a Christian."

The governor then, addressing himself to Marcian, asked him what he intended to do. The saint replied: "I profess and desire the same as my companion." "Then," said Maximus, "you shall both be brought to prison. Be prepared to receive the punishment you deserve."

After twenty days they were again summoned before the governor, who asked them whether they were now prepared to obey the emperors. Marcian courageously replied: "All thy exhortations can never make us abandon our God. We know that he calls us to himself.

Detain us not, therefore, but send us to our crucified Lord, whom, although you blaspheme, we nevertheless adore." Maximus then said: "Since ye wish to die, be it so." Marcian: "Let it be quickly, not that we are afraid of torments, but because we are anxious to be united to Jesus Christ." Maximus: "I am innocent of your deaths; they are the orders of the emperors, not I that condemn you. If you are sure of going to a better place, I am glad." Having received sentence of death, the saints replied: "Peace be with thee, Maximus;" and full of religious joy, they went forward to martyrdom, praising the Lord.

Nicander was followed by his wife Daria and his little son, whom Papian, brother to the martyr St. Pasicrates, carried in his arms. When the holy martyr was about to be decapitated, Daria endeavored to approach, in order to encourage him, but could not by reason of the crowd; whereupon Marcian, stretching forth his hand, presented her to Nicander,· who took leave of her with a serene countenance, saying: "Peace be with thee." The undaunted woman exhorted him in the following words: "Be of good courage, my dear husband, and complete thy sacrifice. I am consoled now that I behold thee going to everlasting glory; and being thus made the wife of a martyr, I rejoice at my happy lot. Give to God those manifestations of love which are his due, and pray for me, that he may save my soul from eternal death."

Marcian also was followed by his wife and other relatives; but she, on the contrary, tore her garments, and exclaimed: "Ah me! why dost thou despise me, my Marcian? Take pity on me, or at least upon this my child." Marcian, interrupting her, said: "How long shall the devil continue to keep thee blind? Depart, and allow me to terminate my martyrdom in peace." But she continued her wailings, and even threw herself upon

him to impede his progress. The saint, therefore, requested a pious Christian, named Zoticus, to keep her back, and having arrived at the place of execution, said to her: "In the name of the Lord, retire, possessed as thou art by the devil, thou canst not behold the termination of my triumph." Then embracing his son, he raised his eyes to heaven, and said: "My God, take this my child into thy holy keeping."

Finally, the two saints, having given each other the kiss of peace, had their eyes bound by the executioner, and were beheaded.

The Acts of this martyrdom are also copied by Ruinart.[1]

CHAPTER L.

ST. GALLICAN, A ROMAN GENERAL, WITH SS. JOHN AND PAUL, OFFICERS.

June 25 and 26.

John and Paul were two holy brothers, Italians of noble birth, and strongly attached to the Christian religion. It happened at their time that Constance, the daughter of Constantine the Great, having been cured of a troublesome disease through the intercession of St. Agnes,

[1] Dom Ruinart adds the following extract from manuscripts in the Vatican Library: "The holy martyrs Nicander and Marcian, as also Daria, the wife of Nicander, and his son, terminated their career at Venafro. The Christians carried off their bodies, and buried them near the place where they had been beheaded; afterwards a church was built here in their honor." And Cardinal Baronius, in his notes upon the martyrology, cites another author (*Petrus de Natalibus,* in *Catal.* l. 5, c. 90), who assures us that the wife of St. Nicander also underwent the capital punishment three days after her husband.—Ed.

[9] See note, page 189.

resolved to lead a devout life, and made a vow of virginity. The emperor, willing to indulge her religious propensities, allowed her to live quite retired, and appointed the two young brothers to act as her pages.

The Scythians having invaded Thrace some time after, with a formidable army, Constantine thought of sending Gallican to oppose them as he had been consul, and by reason of many victories obtained over the barbarians, had acquired the reputation of a valiant commander. The emperor accordingly appointed him general over the entire army; but Gallican refused to accept the commission, except on condition that, upon his returning victorious, he should marry the princess. To this the emperor assented.

In the first engagement, the Roman army was so overpowered by the enemy, that Gallican was on the point of giving orders for a retreat, when our two saints, John and Paul, who had accompanied him to this war, advised him to make a vow that he would embrace the Christian faith if the Lord would render him victorious. Gallican adopted this pious counsel; whereupon the enemy, miraculously seized with a sudden panic, threw down their arms, and surrendered at discretion.

After the victory Gallican returned to the court, not indeed with the intention of being married to the princess, but with the more pious resolution of receiving baptism, and dedicating the remainder of his days exclusively to the service of God. In effect he retired to Ostia, with St. Hilarinus, where he caused a great hospital to be built, in which he assisted the sick with his own hands.

Julian the Apostate, upon his accession to the empire, commanded him either to adore the idols or withdraw from Italy; and Gallican accordingly retired to Alexandria, where he continued to lead a holy life, which he terminated by a glorious martyrdom, on the 25th of

June, upon which day he is commemorated by the Church.

Joh.n and Paul returned to the princess, and continued to wait· upon her until her death, when they were employed in the court; but as soon as Julian ascended the throne, and declared his intentions regarding the Christians, our saints left the palace, to lead a private and religious life.

Julian, knowing their strong attachment to the faith of Jesus Christ, and their readiness to assist the needy or afflicted Christians, ordered Terentian, captain of the Imperial Guards, to intimate to them that it was the emperor's will they should remain at court, and continue to discharge the duties annexed to their respective offices. The saints replied that, being Christians, they could not serve an emperor who was an avowed enemy of Jesus Christ. Upon receiving this answer, Julian commanded Terentian to put them to death, if, after ten days, they should still refuse to return; but the saints declared that, not only after ten days, but after ten years, they would be equally unwilling to abandon their religion, for which they were most anxious to lay down their lives.

After the ten days, however, Terentian appeared at their house with an image of Jove, and a message from the emperor that, if they would but adore it, he would be satisfied. The saints, filled with horror at seeing an idol in their house, exclaimed: "In pity, sir, remove from our sight that execrable object! Who can be so blind as not to perceive that there is but one only God, •and that the histories of all these false deities are only fables and impiety?" Terentian replied: "But if you obey not, I am obliged to put you to death." Hereupon the saints, casting themselves upon their knees, and raising their eyes to heaven, gave God thanks for having given them the grace to die for his holy faith.

These two pious brothers were greatly esteemed in

Rome; and Terentian, fearing that their public execu-tiqn might occasion a sedition, caused them to be be-headed in their own house, about midnight, and to be buried in the adjoining garden. By this means he thought to conceal their death, but God caused it to be published by several energumens, who went about the following morning, declaring that the brothers had suf-fered martyrdom. A young son of Terentian, who was also possessed of the devil, proclaimed their death; and having been cured through the intercession of our saints, Terentian and his entire family embraced the Christian faith.

These events occurred in 362. From the fifth century there has existed a church in Rome dedicated to God in honor of Sts. John and Paul, martyrs, in which their bodies are preserved. This church still exists at the present time.[1] Their names are inserted in the Canon of the Mass.

CHAPTER LI.

ST. THEODORUS OF AMASEA, CALLED THE YOUNG SOLDIER.

St. Gregory Nyssenus has left us a noble panegyric in praise of St. Theodorus, who belonged to the military profession, and was a most exemplary Christian. He happened to be with his legion at Amasea, a city of Pontus, when Galerius and Maximin were persecuting the Christians, in the year 306. His commanding officer, knowing him to be a Christian, commanded him to sac-

[1] This church gives title to a Cardinal. In 1773 it was given by Clement XIV. to the Blessed Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Congre-gation of the Passionists—a work which he had begun with his brother John Baptist. The Holy Father, while making this donation graciously called to mind the names of the two brothers: *Joannes et Paulus.*—Ed.

rifice to the gods, in obedience to the imperial edicts. The saint protested that he was faithful to the emperors, but was also anxious to be faithful to his God, and that sooner than abandon his faith, he would willingly lose his honors, his possessions, and his life.

He was accordingly brought before the governor, who used all his arts to persuade him to renounce Jesus Christ, but the Christian hero, despising alike his promises and his threats, boldly answered: "I am prepared to persevere in my religion, although I be torn to pieces or burned alive; it is but just that my body should be sacrificed to Him who created it." After this protestation, the governor discharged him, adding that he would give him time to consider whether he would obey the emperors; but Theodorus employed the while in imploring from God the graces necessary for the struggle that awaited him.

He continued to comfort the persecuted Christians, and to exhort them to remain steadfast in their confession of Jesus Christ. Moved by an extraordinary inspiration from God, he set fire one night to a famous temple in the city, dedicated to the goddess Cybele, who was adored by the pagans as the mother of the gods; and, as there was a high wind at the time, the fabric was quickly reduced to ashes. The saint, instead of concealing his action, joyously proclaimed that he had burned the execrable building, and was accordingly arrested and brought before the governor, who threatened the severest tortures unless he would atone for his crime by sacrificing to the gods. Theodorus answered that he gloried in what he had done.

The governor, perceiving that Theodorus was not to be moved by threats, endeavored to gain him over by allurements, and promised to raise him to the pontifical dignity if he would comply. The saint replied: "I look upon the idolatrous priests as unhappy men, and the

pontiffs I consider more so. Since, among the impious, they rank highest, their condition is the more lamentable. Truly pious persons should rejoice in having the lowest place in the house of God."[1] Enraged at these words, the tyrant caused him to be stretched upon the rack, and his sides to be torn with iron hooks, until the bones were laid bare; yet during this terrible torture the saint joyously chanted that verse of the Psalm: *I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be always in my mouth)*

The governor, astonished at so much patience, said to him: "Unhappy man! art thou not ashamed to place thy confidence in that Christ who was obliged to suffer so ignominious a death?" Theodorus returned him the following pious answer: "It is an ignominy which is gloried in by all those who invoke the name of the Lord Jesus." The governor then sent him to prison, hoping that after some time he might be enabled to overcome his fortitude; but the saint was visited in the night by angels, who, together with him, chanted the divine praises, and filled his dungeon with celestial splendor that astonished the keeper.

After some days, the governor, finding his constancy undiminished, commanded him to be burned alive. St. Theodorus received the sentence with joy; upon approaching the fire he armed himself with the sign of the cross, and continued till his last breath to bless the Lord.

1 See another part of the answer of the saint, page 34.

2 " Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore; semper laus ejus in ore meo."—*Ps.* xxxiii. 2.

CHAPTER LII.

SS. PERPETUA AND FELICITAS OF CARTHAGE, WITH STS. REVOCATUS, SATURNINUS, SECUNDULUS, AND SATURUS.

March 7.

St. Augustine makes frequent and honorable mention of these saints in his works, and was wont to hold them up to the people as examples of fidelity to Jesus Christ.

The Emperor Severus published an edict, commanding all Christians who refused to sacrifice to the gods to be put to death; whereupon Minutius, the proconsul of Africa, caused five young persons to be arrested at Carthage, who were as yet catechumens, and, together with them,[1] Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas, Sts. Saturninus and Secundulus?

Perpetua was a young woman, only twenty-two years of age, who led a very devout life, was married, and had

[1] We are here informed that the martyrs were nine in number—five catechumens, and four whose names are given; but from their Acts, most correctly edited by Ruinart, it appears that the saints who are named were four of the five catechumens; the fifth was one Revocatus. They were afterwards joined by Saturus, who voluntarily surrendered himself to the persecutors, and is mentioned by St. Perpetua in the narration of her first vision.—Ed.

[2] We have judged it necessary to modify somewhat a few passages of this interesting account after authentic Acts collected with much care and given entire by Ruinart and Alban Butler. By them we are informed that Felicitas was seven or eight months gone with child, and that Perpetua had yet a father, an old man still very much attached to paganism; her mother was evidently a Christian, as was one of her two brothers, the other being a catechumen; her infant was yet at her breast, and she nursed it herself. We observe that St. Saturus is not mentioned in the Roman martyrology.—Ed.

an only son. Felicitas was still younger, but also married, and a most exemplary person. The martyrs were kept for some time in a private house, guarded by soldiers; during which time the father of St. Perpetua came to see her, and, being a pagan, used all his endeavors to make her abandon the faith. In the original Acts of these martyrs we find that the occurrences which took place up to the eve of their martyrdom were written by St. Perpetua herself. The principal facts are the following:

"My father," writes the saint, "used all his endeavors to pervert me; I resolutely answered, 'Father, I am a Christian.' He instantly threw himself upon me in a rage, as if to tear out my eyes, and used the most injurious language. A few days afterwards we all received the holy baptism, and were led to the public prison, where I was horrified by the darkness, the noisome smell, and the great heat occasioned by the number of prisoners. I had the happiness to have my son brought to me here, which greatly consoled me. My brother came to see me, and desired me to pray to the Lord to let me know whether I was to obtain the crown of martyrdom. I accordingly placed myself in prayer, and saw, in a vision, a golden ladder which reached to the heavens; it was very narrow, and to the sides were fixed sharp knives and iron spikes. At the foot of this ladder was a dragon, who appeared ready to devour those that would attempt to mount it. The first that went up was a certain Christian named Saturus, who invited me to follow him. I ascended, and found myself in a spacious garden, where I met a man of very fine aspect, who said to me: 'Thou art welcome, my daughter.' After this vision I knew that we were all destined to suffer martyrdom, and I told my brother so.

"My father came again to see me at the prison, anc. throwing himself at my feet in a flood of tears : 'Daugh

ter,' he said, 'have pity on me, a poor old man, that am thy father; have pity, at least, on thy child, and bring not ruin upon us all by thy obstinacy.' I was pierced with grief, but remained immovable in my resolution.

"On the following day I was brought before the auditor, Hilarian, who, by reason of the death of the proconsul, acted as judge. My father appeared with me, holding my son in his arms, whereupon the judge said: 'Perpetua, have pity on thy father and on thy son-sacrifice to the gods.' I answered that I was a Christian, and that we were all ready to die for our faith. The judge then condemned us to be devoured by wild beasts.

"We received the sentence with joy, and were brought back to prison, where we were met by my father, who tearing his hair and his beard, threw himself upon his face on the earth, lamenting that he lived to see that day. He once endeavored to pull me off the platform, but the judge commanded him to be beaten off, and he received a blow with a stick, at which I was much grieved; but the Lord continued to grant me strength."

Secundulus died in prison, of his sufferings, and Saturus had already obtained the crown.[1] Felicitas de-

[1] The Acts state that Saturus suffered with the rest, and also relate a vision with which he was honored. We are assured by the same venerable authority, that St. Perpetua was favored with two other most important visions. She had a young brother, named Dinocrates, who died when he was only seven years of age, of a most hideous ulcer in the face. She recollected his death during her imprisonment; and having prayed for his repose, saw him in a vision, with the ulcer on his face, having a most squalid appearance, and endeavoring to drink from a vessel which he could not reach. After her vision she knew that her brother was in pain, and continued to pray fervently for his relief. She was accordingly favored with a second vision, in which she saw him quite clean, refreshing himself with the water, and retaining only a scar where the ulcer had formerly been. "I knew," she says, "from

sired to suffer with the rest, but she was pregnant, and the law forbade women to be put to death in that state. Her companions therefore prayed for her, and on that very day she was delivered of a daughter. The saint moaned by reason of her pains, and one of the guards said to her: "Dost thou moan? What wilt thou do when thou shalt be devoured by wild beasts?" She answered: "I now suffer by myself; but then I shall have Jesus Christ with me, and by his grace I will endure all things for his sake."

Upon the appointed day the martyrs went forward to execution with a joy that was manifest to all.

The other saints having been torn by the wild beasts,

this vision, that he had been released from his pain." It has been thought worth while to mention these visions of St. Perpetua, as they must be most acceptable to the reader, since they show that the existence of a place of temporary punishment after death, and prayers for the departed, were doctrines of the Church as early as the year 203. Ruinart, in his "Admonitio in passionem, SS. Perpet. et Felic., num. 6," refutes the opinion of Valesius, that the compiler of these Acts was a Montanist, because these heretics pretended to have many supernal illustrations, and like the fanatics of our own days, extraordinary impulses from the Holy Spirit. He also mentions a letter written to Valesius, wherein the writer endeavors to prove from his style in similar productions that Tertullian was the original compiler. Indeed, St. Perpetua herself has been most unjustly charged with Montanism by the enemies of Catholic doctrine, but the imputation is as injudicious as it is unjust, since it establishes beyond a doubt the authenticity of the Acts, which could not be denied, and palpably manifests the straits to which heresy is driven. How could the Church rank as a martyr a woman belonging to a sect universally condemned for their blasphemous errors, and loathed and abhorred for their enormous extravagances? St. Augustine himself, although he declares (Lib. 1, de anima, ad Renatum, et Lib. 3, ad Vincent.) that the Revelations of St. Perpetua are not to be placed in the Canon of Scripture, nevertheless styles them "Divine Revelations," and calls upon the faithful to honor them—*Exhortationes earurn in* divinis revelationibus, *cum legerentur, audivimus . . . mente spectavimus, religione honoravimus"* S. Aug. Serm. 1, de SS. Perpet. et Felic.—Ed.

Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas were wrapped in nets and exposed to a mad cow. St. Perpetua was first attacked, and having been tossed in the air, she fell upon her back. Then sitting up, she perceived her clothes torn, and was endeavoring to cover herself, when she was again knocked down; but recovering herself, she stretched forth her hand to raise St. Felicitas, whom she perceived prostrate upon the ground, much hurt. The populace were at length moved to compassion, and the two saints were led into the centre of the amphitheatre, and despatched by the gladiators. Thus did they receive, with their companions, the heavenly crown, on the 7th.March, in the year 203.

St. Augustine[1] cites the Acts of their martyrdom, and Tertullian[2] and St. Fulgentius[3] have passed the most magnificent encomiums on Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas. They are mentioned also in the Canon of the Mass. Their relics were brought to Rome.[4]

CHAPTER LIII.

SS. GEORGE, DEACON; AURELIUS, NATALIA, FELIX, LILIOSA OF CORDUBA.

Spain was honored by the martyrdom of many Christians under the Moors, in the ninth century. Among these was Aurelius, who was born in Corduba, of an ὄpu

[1] *De Anima,* l. 1, c. 10; l. 3, c. 9; l. 4, c. 18.

[2] *De Anima.*

[3] *Senn. JO.*

[4] Dorn Ruinart and Giry add that the body of St. Perpetua, taken later to France, was resting in their time at the Abbey of St. Peter of Vierzon.—Ed.

lent and noble family. His father was a Mahomedan, and his mother a Christian; but having been left an orphan very young, he was reared by his aunt in the Christian religion. The Mahomedan books which the Moors made him read served only to convince him of the falsity of their sect, and to make him more enamoured of the religion of Jesus Christ. Urged by his relatives to marry, he espoused Natalia, a Christian virgin, remarkable for her piety.

Aurelius was related to a certain Christian named Felix, who had unhappily denied the faith; but although he repented of this sin he had not the courage to proclaim himself, and accordingly lived very retired with his wife; both families, however, lived on terms of the strictest intimacy.

Aurelius one day saw a certain Christian merchant called John cruelly scourged in the public square, and afterwards dragged through the city; after which sight he returned home and said to his wife: "Thou art continually exhorting me to retire from the world. I believe the hour has now arrived, in which God calls me to a more perfect life. Let us, therefore, from this day forward live as brother and sister; let us give our whole attention to the service of God, and prepare ourselves for martyrdom." Natalia instantly adopted the advice, and from that hour they gave themselves to a more holy life of prayer and mortification. Among other works of Christian charity, Aurelius visited the men and Natalia the women who were imprisoned for the faith; and among these confessors they met a holy priest named Eulogius, who afterwards wrote the Acts of their martyrdom. He advised Aurelius to put his children in a place of safety; and, having left them a competence, to sell the remainder of his goods, and give the money to the poor. Meanwhile, two holy virgins, Mary and Flora, who had been visited in prison by Natalia, suffered mar-

tyrdom, and afterwards appeared to her in a vision, dressed in white robes and resplendent with glory. Natalia at this happy sight said to them: "Shall I also have the blessed lot to tread the same path which conducted you to heaven?" "Yes," they replied, "for thee also is martyrdom being prepared—thou shalt shortly be with us in glory." Natalia related her vision to Aurelius. From that moment they thought of nothing but preparing themselves to die for Jesus Christ; and, according to the advice of Eulogius, distributed their property to the poor.

At this time there came to Corduba a certain monk, from Palestine, named George, who had lived for twenty-seven years in the monastery of St. Saba. He had been sent by the abbot of another monastery, containing nearly five hundred religious, to Africa, for the purpose of collecting alms; but on his arrival he found the Christians greatly oppressed by the Moors, and accordingly passed into Spain, where he found religion similarly circumstanced. Uncertain what course to adopt, he repaired to a certain monastery of exemplary religious, at Tabnes, to recommend himself to their prayers. He here met Natalia, who upon seeing him, exclaimed: "This good monk is destined to be our companion in martyrdom!" It so happened; for on the following day Natalia brought him to her own house at Corduba, where they found Felix and his wife Liliosa speaking with Aurelius concerning their desire of dying for Jesus Christ. Moved by divine grace, they all resolved to repair to the church, that, thus declaring themselves to be Christians, they might obtain the wished-for crown.

They were not arrested in the church; but on their return, being asked by a Moorish officer why they had entered the church, they answered: "The faithful are wont to visit the tombs of the martyrs; and we have

done so, because we are Christians." The officer instantly sent a report to the governor, and on the following day a guard was sent to the house. Having arrived at the door, they cried out: "Come forth, ye wretches! come to the death, since ye are weary of life!" Aurelius and Felix appeared, accompanied by their wives; and George, the monk, perceiving that the soldiers heeded him not, said to them: "Why will ye compel Christians to follow your false religion?" For these words he was instantly maltreated by the soldiers, with blows and kicks, and knocked prostrate on the ground; whereupon Natalia said: "Rise, brother, and we shall proceed."

The holy monk answered: "Meanwhile, sister, I have earned this much for Christ;" and having raised himself up very much bruised, he was in that state presented with the rest to the governor, who asked them why they thus blindly ran to death, and made them promises of the most ample rewards if they would renounce Jesus Christ. They answered with one accord: "These promises can avail nothing. We despise this present life, because we hope for a better one. We love our faith, and abhor every other religion." Hereupon the governor sent them to prison, and having found them constant in their faith at the end of five days, condemned them all to death, with the exception of George. But the holy monk having declared that Mahomet was a disciple of the devil, and that his followers were in a state of perdition, he also was condemned with his companions.

While they were proceeding to the place of execution Natalia encouraged the others to suffer with fortitude; which so irritated the soldiers that they ceased not to buffet and kick her until they arrived at the appointed place, where all these blessed martyrs received the crown, on the 27th July, in the year 852?

' Alban Butler adds that the Christians took away the bodies during the night and buried them in different places. St. Eulogius took

CHAPTER LIV.

STS. TARACHUS, PROBUS, AND ANDRONICUS, MARTYRED IN CILICIA.

October n.

The martyrdom of these three saints causes us to wonder at the extent to which the cruelty of tyrantsand the patience of saintscan be carried. Cardinal Orsi assures us that there is no document of antiquity more authentic than the original Acts of these martyrs. Thev were brought before Numerianus Maximus, governor of the province, at Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia. Their Acts are given at length by Orsi, but we here give a succinct account, for the convenience of the reader.

Tarachus, who was the eldest, was first interrogated. Being asked his name, he replied: "I am a Christian." The governor said: "But I wish to know thy name." Tarachus again replied: "I am a Christian." Maximus, in a rage, desired the executioners to break his jaw-bones, and to tell him not to answer one thins; for another. The saint observed that he had answered his real name, but that he was called Tarachus by others: and proceeded to state that he was a Roman citizen, and had belonged to the military profession, but retired

charge of the education of the two daughters of Sts. Aurelius and Natalia, and finished also his life by a glorious martyrdom, March u, 859. In 858 two monks of the abbey of St. Germain des Pres, at Paris, named Usnard and Odilard, carried from Corduba to France the bodies of Sts. George and Aurelius with the head of St. Natalia. This transfer was accompanied by many miracles: Aimoin wrote an account of it.—Ed.

[1] *Istor. tccl.* l. 9» n· 30.

from .the army in order the better to observe his religion. Maximus then said: "In consideration of thy age I am anxious to honor thee, if thou wilt obey the emperor by sacrificing to the gods." The saint replied: "The emperors are grievously mistaken and blinded by the devil. To my God I sacrifice my heart, and not the blood of animals which he needeth not. Whilst I honor the law of God, I cannot observe the law of false deities." Maximus asked: "And besides ours, is there any other law?" Tarachus answered: "This your law is impious, since it teaches you to adore as gods blocks of marble and of wood." The governor then caused the saint to be stripped and scourged with rods, during which torture he said: "These stripes but encourage me to place all my confidence in God and in his Christ." Maximus rejoined: "Then thou servest two gods? Having confessed God and Christ, how canst thou deny a plurality of Gods?" Tarachus explained: "I confess one only God, because Christ is the Son of God; and the Father and the Son are but one God." Maximus, being unwilling to hear him any further, sent him to prison; and desired Probus to be brought before him.

This saint being asked his name and parentage, answered that men called him Probus, but that it was much more pleasing to him to be called a Christian. He added, that his father was of Thrace, but that he was born in Pamphylia; that he was a plebeian by condition, and had been possessed of a large estate, which he had renounced to serve God. Maximus told him that by sacrificing to the gods he would be honored by the emperors, and that he himself would admit him to his friendship. Probus replied: "I want neither honors from the emperors, nor thy friendship." The governor then ordered him to be stripped and beaten with sinews of oxen, and after some time to be turned and beaten on the belly. During this torture Probus called upon the

Lord to assist him; whereupon Maximus sent some of the executioners to ask him where was the assistance of God which he had invoked. The saint replied: "God helps me, and will continue to help me; so much so that I dread not your torments." Maximus said: "Look, wretch, how the ground is all covered with thy blood!" The saint answered: "But thou shouldst know that the more my body suffers for Christ, the more my soul is enlivened." The governor then sent him to prison, and called Andronicus.

Maximus questioned this saint also concerning his name and parentage; he answered that he was a Christian, but was called Andronicus by men, and that he was a native of Ephesus, of noble family. Maximus said to him: "Obey the emperors who are our fathers, and adore the gods." Andronicus replied: "Thou art right in calling them fathers; for the devil is thy father." Maximussaid: "I have compassion on thy youth; but know that I have great torments ready, in case thou wilt not sacrifice to the gods." Andronicus replied: "Iappear to thee young in years; but my soul hath grown to a manly age, and I am prepared for all thy torments." Maximus then commanded him to be put to torture; during which a certain notary told him to obey the governor. Andronicus said: "Keep thy advice to thyself; although older than I am thou art foolish in advising me to sacrifice to demons." During the infliction of the tortures the tyrant said to him: "Wretch, art thou insensible to torments? Wilt thou not give over thy follies which cannot save thee from my hands?" The saint answered: "These follies are necessary for those who put their trust in God; but thy wisdom shall bring eternal death to thy soul." The governor then ordered that he should be cruelly tortured in the limbs, that his sides should be torn, and his wounds scraped with broken tiles. The saint having endured all with fortitude, had

chains put about his neck and feet, and was sent to prison with the rest.

The governor having gone from Tarsus to Mopsuestia, summoned the three saints before him at this place; and again beginning with Tarachus, commanded him to sacrifice to the gods. The saint having persevered in his refusal, Maximus ordered his mouth to be beaten with a stone until his teeth were knocked out; upon which he said: "Although thou shouldst break every limb of my body, yet will I not alter my resolution. I am prepared to suffer all thou canst invent; and am well assured of receiving the necessary assistance from him for whom I combat." Maximus then caused the tire to be brought, and his hands to be burned; whereupon Tarachus said: " This fire doth not cause me to be afraid; I fear rather the eternal fire which would await me, did I obey thy command." Maximus then commanded him to be tied up by the feet, and suspended over a great smoke; the saint having suffered these tortures without the least complaint the tyrant caused his nostrils to be filled with vinegar, salt, and mustard; but, perceiving that Tarachus endured all in silence, he remanded him to prison till he could devise new tortures.

After this Probus was called up, and the governor said to him: "The emperors sacrifice to the gods, and wilt thou not sacrifice?" Probus answered: "The torments which thou hast already caused me to suffer have given me new strength; it is, therefore, improbable that I can be induced to sacrifice to the gods whom I know not. I adore one only God, and him only do I serve. How can blocks of wood and marble be called gods?" Maximus, interrupting him, caused him to be buffeted on the mouth, and the soles of his feet burned with red-hot plates of iron; but the saint appearing insensible to these tortures, was stretched upon the rack and most cruelly scourged. The tyrant perceiving that all these

torments were insufficient to overcome the constancy of the saint, commanded his head to be shaved and burning coals to be placed upon it; but finding that this torture was also to no purpose, he endeavored to seduce him by promising him the favor of the emperors, which had been extended to previous apostates. Probus answered: "All those who have received such favors have thereby miserably lost themselves. What can he expect .who has lost the favor of the only true God?" Maximus, who imagined himself personally offended by every answer of the saint, ordered him to be again buffeted on the face, and brought back to prison.

Andronicus was next summoned, whom the tyrant endeavored to persuade that Tarachus and Probus had already sacrificed. The saint replied: "In vain dost thou attempt to deceive me with lies; they have not done so, nor will I ever be induced to do so. I fear thee not; use all thy tortures, and thou shalt see how far superior to them is a true servant of the Lord." Upon these words the tyrant caused him to be tied between four posts, and most cruelly scourged; whereupon the saint asked: "Have all thy threats only come to this?" Maximus ordered his lacerated back to be rubbed with salt, but the saint told the executioners to continue this infliction in order that he might be well seasoned. "Thou shalt not," said Maximus, "overcome me." "Nor shall I," replied Andronicus, "ever permit thy torments to diminish my constancy. By the grace of that Ged who strengthens me, thou shalt always find me the same." It so happened: the governor, wearied by his perseverance, ordered him back to prison.

Maximus then passed to the city of Anazarbus, whither he commanded the saints to be brought, and again began with Tarachus, ordering him to sacrifice to the gods. "O wretched deities!" exclaimed the saint, " for whom and for whose worshippers eternal fire is prepared." Maximus: " I nerceive that thou wouldst

have me.instantly behead thee in order that thy sufferings be shortened." Tarachus: "Thou art deceived: for, on the contrary, I beseech thee to prolong my combat, that I may receive the greater reward." "Unhappy wretch!" exclaimed the tyrant, "what reward canst thou hope for from death?" Tarachus: "Alas, thou knowest not the reward which is prepared for us by our God who is in heaven!" After this interrogation had continued for some time, the tyrant ordered him to be stretched on the rack, to be buffeted on the face and mouth, and his breasts to be perforated with red-hot iron spikes; he then commanded his ears to be cut off, and the skin to be flayed from his head, that burning coals might be placed thereon; during this torture the saint said: " Exercise what cruelty thou wilt, I will never turn my back upon the God who strengthens me." Finally, his shoulders having been pierced as his breasts had been, he was condemned to the beasts and senPto prison.

Probus was next called, and Maximus, finding his constancy undiminished, caused him to be suspended by the feet, and his sides and back to be pierced with red-hot spikes. Having then caused wine and meats, which had been offered to-the gods, to be forced down his throat,the tyrant said to him: "What has the endurance of thy tortures availed thee? Behold! thou hast at last participated in our sacrifices." Probus answered: "Doth it, .then, appear to thee that thou hast obtained a great victory? Although thou shouldst cause all the filth of thy altars to be forced into my mouth, yet would not my soul be contaminated, since God beholds the violence which I have suffered." Maximus, to vent his rage upon him, caused the calves of his legs and his hands to be thoroughly perforated with red-hot spikes, and his eyes to be burned out with them; yet during these horrible tortures no word of lamentation was heard from the saint; but he continued to bless the Lord, and said to the

tyrant: "As long as I shall have breath, I will render thanksgiving to the Lord, who grants me strength and patience; I desire nothing so much as to finish my life by the most cruel death which thy tyranny can invent, in order that I may render to God the homage which he deserves."

Andronicus was then brought forward, and having continued to despise equally the threats and promises of the tyrant, rolls of paper were lighted upon his abdomen, and burning spikes placed between his fingers. The saint having invoked the name of Jesus for strength to suffer these tortures, Maximus said to him: "This Jesus, in whom thou confidest, was a malefactor, crucified by Pontius Pilate." "Peace!" replied z\ndronicus, "thou shouldst not speak of him, of whom thou art unworthy; if thou didst know him, thou wouldst not blaspheme his name, nor persecute his servants. Thou and thy associates shall suffer for this; but may the Lord punish ye in such a manner that ye may come to the knowledge of your misdeeds." After this speech Maximus caused his teeth and tongue to be pulled out, and sent him back to prison.

Upon the following day an arena of wild beasts was prepared, to whom the martyrs were exposed; the beasts not daring to approach them, a most ferocious bear was let loose; but the animal having approached Andronicus, began to lick his wounds, whereupon Maximus commanded her to be killed at the saint's feet. A lioness was then put forward; but she laid down at the feet of Tarachus like a lamb. Maximus having caused her to be irritated, her fury was directed tow'ards the spectators, and she was accordingly shut up in her den. Finally, the tyrant caused the martyrs to be cut down by the gladiators, and they thus obtained the desired crown.[1]

[1] Their Acts contain another interesting fact. Before retiring the governor commanded ten soldiers to intermix the bodies with those of the

CHAPTER LV.

ST. QUIRINUS, BISHOP OF SISCIA.

June 4.

The Emperors Diocletian and Maximian having abdicated the empire, in the year 303, their successor, Galerius, continued the persecution against the Christians. St. Quirinus, who was bishop of Siscia,[1] in Croatia after having converted the inhabitants of that country to the faith of Christ, understanding that Maximus, who ruled in Pannonia as lieutenant for the governor, had given orders for his arrest, escaped from the city, in order that he might be spared for the benefit of his flock.

He was overtaken, however, by the soldiers, and presented before Maximus, who asked him why he had fled; the saint replied: "I obey the orders of my Master, who hath said, *When they persecute ye in one city, fly ye into another.*"[2] Maximus: "Who hath given this order?" Quirinus: "Jesus Christ, who is the true God." Maximus: "But knowest thou not that the emperor can find

gladiators who had been slain, and to guard them in order that they might not be recognized and the Christians might not be able to carry them off. Several, however, approached in the darkness and implored the help of God with great fervor; their prayers were heard. The night was very dark and a violent thunderstorm with rain dispersed the guards, 'Hie faithful distinguished the three bodies by a miraculous star or ray of light that streamed on each of them. They joyfully carried off the precious treasures and hid them in a hollow cave in the neighboring mountains, where the governor was not able, by any search that he could make, to find them.—Ed.

[1] At present Sisek, or Sisseg, a town situated two leagues from Zagrab, in Croatia. The episcopal sec of Siscia has been transferred to Zagrab. —Ed.

[2] *Matt.* x. 23.

thee in all places, and that thy God cannot save thee from our hands?" Quirinus: "I know this, that our God is with us, and can succor us in all places. He it is that grants me strength in this my decrepit age, and will also uphold me during thy tortures."

Maximus: "Thou speakest much because thou art an old man, and hopest to baffle us with talk; we require thy submission, not thy exhortations; there shall be no further toleration for Christians in the empire. The emperor has ordered that all shall sacrifice to the gods on pain of death; obey therefore." Quirinus: "I cannot obey orders that are contrary to my religion. How can I refuse to obey God, in order to please men?" Maximus: "Dotard! hadst thou not lived so long, thou wouldst not have learned such idle talk—obey the emperor, and learn to be wise, even at the close of thy days." Quirinus: "Dost thou then think it wisdom to commit such an act of impiety?" Maximus: "No more words—choose to be a priest of Jupiter, or to die amid torments." Quirinus: "I have already made my choice, and I now exercise the functions of a priest, in offering myself as a sacrifice to my God, and esteem myself happy in being, at the same time, the priest and the victim."

Maximus, unwilling to hear him any longer, caused him to be cruelly scourged. The holy bishop, during the infliction, raised his eyes to heaven, and returned thanks to God. Then, turning towards Maximus, he said that he was willing to suffer still greater torments, in order to give a good example to his followers; but the lieutenant, fearing that he might expire under the lash, sent him back to prison.

St. Quirinus, upon his arrival, again thanked God for what he had suffered, and prayed that those who were in prison might be illuminated by the light of the true faith. About midnight the martyr was seen surrounded by a great light, whereupon the jailer, named Marcel-

lus, casting himself at the feet of the saint, exclaimed: "Servant of God, pray to him for me, since I believe that there is no other God than he whom thou adorest." St. Quirinus, having instructed him in the faith, as well as the time would permit, baptized him.

At the expiration of three days he was sent, loaded with chains, to Amantius, the governor of the greater Pannonia, which is now called Hungary. On his way thither he was confined at Sabadia, where he was visited by some Christian women, who brought him food; and while the saint was blessing it, the chains fell from his hands and feet, as the Lord wished to show, by this sign, his approval of the charity done to the venerable prelate.

Upon his arrival the governor had him brought before him, and, having read the proceedings of his former trial, endeavored to shake his resolution by threatening to put him to a most cruel death, notwithstanding his most advanced age. The saint replied that the recollection of his old age should the more induce him to despise death, as he had but a short time to live; and Amantius despairing of being able to change him, ordered him to be cast into the river Sabarius, with a mill-stone tied to his neck.

While the saint was being led to the bridge, a great concourse of people had assembled. They saw him cast into the river, together with the mill-stone; but both were seen to float upon the surface of the water; whence the holy bishop commenced to exhort the faithful to remain firm in the faith, and, as he continued to preach thus for a considerable time, many pagans were converted. At last the saint made the following prayer: •'Christ Jesus, my Saviour, these people have already-seen the wonders of Thy power; grant me now the grace to die for Thee, nor permit me to lose the crown of martyrdom." His body then sank, together with the stone, and he thus rendered his soul to God on the 4th

June, in the beginning of the fourth century. His death is placed by St. Jerome in the year 310, and by Baronius 308.

The body of Saint Ouirinus was afterwards translated to Rome, and buried near the catacombs of St. Sebastian; but Pope Innocent II. finally deposited it in the church of St. Mary beyond the Tiber.

CHAPTER LVI.

ST. BLASE, BISHOP OF SEBASTE.

February 3.

St. Blase was a native of the city of Sebaste, in Armenia, and in his younger days applied himself to the study of philosophy, in which he made considerable progress; he afterwards studied medicine with great success. The science of the saints, however, and a desire to improve in the love of God, occupied his principal attention, whereby being inflamed with an ardent charity towards the poor, he went frequently to relieve them in their sickness. Upon the death of the bishop, his fellow-citizens unanimously elected him their pastor, by reason of his extraordinary virtues and great learning.

He accepted the office, as being unwilling to resist the will of God, which appeared too manifest in his election to be mistaken; but in the government of his church he lost not that spirit of holy retirement which he had had from his youth. He therefore retired to Mount Argeus, without the city, and dwelt in a cave there.[1] During

[1] The holy bishop retired, however, only when he was obliged to do so on account of the persecution, following in this the counsel and example of the divine Master. This we find in his office as well as in the Acts collected by the Bollandists.—Ed.

our saint's residence in this place the Lord was pleased to manifest his sanctity by honoring him with the gift of miracles, and numerous crowds of persons used constantly to come to him for the cure of their bodily diseases as well as of their spiritual maladies. Even the most ferocious animals are said to have proceeded to his cave to be relieved. If they found the saint in prayer, they would patiently wait until he had done; nor would they depart until they had received his blessing.[1]

About the year 315, Agricolaus, governor of Cappadocia and the lesser Armenia, had been sent, by the Emperor Licinius, to Sebaste, to put to death the Chris-

[1] Four different manuscript acts of this saint have been published by Bollandus, who observes that the first, which was found in a monastery of Canons Regular, is of very great antiquity. These four MSS. agree in the leading facts, and all mention the circumstance of the beasts visiting our saint and being blessed by him. The MS. III. compares St. Blase, in this respect, to Daniel in the den of lions, and to Elias in the wilderness, and MS. IV., which was in the possession of Cardinal Baronius, observes that, as the prophet was fed by ravens, so our saint was supplied with food by the wild beasts that frequented his cave. As it was the sin of man that first rendered animals savage towards him, it has been regarded as a proof of the innocence and sanctity of a person to find wild beasts inoffensive and familiar with him; and several instances of this mark of holiness are to be met with in the "Lives of the Saints." The blessing of those beasts by St. Blase will remind some readers of the ceremony still performed at Rome, on St. Anthony's day, 17th January, when horses and other useful animals are assembled before the church, and blessed. This ceremony has been the subject of much unbecoming and inconsiderate ridicule, for it should be remembered that, in the beginning, the Almighty Creator himself blessed all his creatures; and, after the fall of man, pronounced a curse upon the earth. It is to avert as much as possible the effects of this maledic-tion that we pray for the giving and preserving of the fruits of the earth, and for the well-being of those animals that God has created for our benefit, and lor the manifestation of his own almighty power. Yet the man who, with scrupulous punctuality, says grace before meat, and implores the blessing of heaven on the roasted ribs of an ox upon his table, will ridicule the benediction invoked over the *living* animal, when standing at the foot of the Esquiline.—Ed.

tians of that city; and, immediately upon his arrival, commenced to put his bloody commission into execution, by commanding that all those who had been already imprisoned for the faith should be devoured by wild beasts. He accordingly sent huntsmen into the neighboring forest to catch the ferocious animals, in order to execute his barbarous design. When they arrived at Mount Argeus, they found a multitude of these beasts assembled round the cave of St. Blase, and the holy bishop in the midst of them, performing his devotions. Astonished at this sight, they returned to Agricolaus, and informed him of the fact; which, although it caused him to marvel greatly, did not prevent him from sending his soldiers to arrest our saint. When they intimated to him the order of the governor he answered with a cheerful countenance: "Let us go to shed our blood for Jqsus Christ;" then turning to those who stood by, he protested that he had long sighed for the honor of martyrdom, and that on the preceding night the Lord had manifested to him that he would vouchsafe to accept the sacrifice of his life.

As soon as the news was spread among the citizens that their bishop was being led to Sebaste by order of the governor the streets were filled with people who. with tears in their eyes, asked his blessing. Among the rest was a woman, who, weeping bitterly, presented to him her child, who was expiring by reason of a small bone having stuck in his throat; full of holy confidence, she besought the saint to save his life. St. Blase, moved to compassion by the tears of the afflicted mother, prayed to the Lord not only for the relief of that child, but of all those who would find themselves similarly afflicted. Having terminated his prayer the child perfectly; recovered; and hence the origin of the peculiar devotion of the faithful to this saint when afflicted with diseases of the throat.

When St. Blase arrived at the city and was presented to the governor, he was commanded to sacrifice to the immortal gods. The saint answered: "What a title for your demons, who can bring only evil on their worshippers! There is only one Immortal God, and him do I adore." Agricolaus, infuriated at this answer, caused the saint to undergo a scourging so prolonged and cruel that it was thought the saint could not possibly survive it; but having endured this torture with placid courage, he was sent to prison, where he continued to work miracles· so extraordinary that the governor ordered him to be again lacerated with iron hooks.

The blood of the saint ran profusely, and certain pious women were induced to collect portions of it, which act of devotion was amply rewarded, for they were seized, with two of their children, and brought before the governor. He commanded them to sacrifice to the gods under pain of death. The holy women asked for their idols, as some thought, to sacrifice to them, but they no sooner laid hands upon them than they cast them into an adjoining lake, for which -they were instantly beheaded, along with their children.

Agricolaus resolved to wreak his vengeance on St. Blase; and ..ot content with the torture which he had already caused him to endure, commanded him to be stretched upon the rack, and his flesh to be torn with iron combs, in which state a red-hot coat of mail was placed upon him. Finally, the tyrant, despairing of overcoming his constancy, ordered him to be cast into the lake; the saint, arming himself with the sign of the cross, walked upon the waters, and, arriving at the middle, sat down, and invited the idolaters to do the same if they believed that their gods could enable them. Some were so rash as to make the attempt, but were immediately drowned.

St. Blase was admonished then by a voice from heaven to go forth from the lake and encounter his martyrdom.

When he reached the land the impious tyrant ordered him to be beheaded. This sentence was executed in the year 313. The republic of Ragusa honor him as their principal patron, and he is the titular saint of many cities.

CHAPTER LVII.

ST. ANASTASIA, VIRGIN, AND ST. CYRIL OF ROME.

October 28.

Valerian succeeded to the empire on the death of Gallus, in the year 244, and in the beginning of his reign showed himself so favorable to the Christians, that many of them were employed at his court; but his subsequent cruelty towards them was as remarkable as his former clemency. A certain Egyptian magician succeeded in ingratiating himself into the emperor's confidence; and as many Christians, by the sign of the cross, were enabled to destroy his demoniacal incantations, the favorite stimulated Valerian to undertake the destruction of the Christian religion, towards the close of the year 247.

St. Anastasia was a Roman virgin of noble and Christian parentage; and, although endowed with extraordinary beauty, manifested from her tenderest years a desire to be espoused to Jesus Christ only. She accordingly led a most holy life, without any other desire than to increase in the divine love. There was at Rome a nunnery governed by a most holy lady named Sophia, the inmates of which lived in the greatest Christian perfection and among these St. Anastasia enrolled herself, in order to make still further progress in virtue. The devil left no means untried in order to tempt her to abandon her holy design; but, by the assistance of continual prayer,

she overcame these temptations, and thus rendered herself more perfect, and more intimately united to Jesus Christ.

No sooner were the edicts of Valerian published against the Christians than his emissaries began a most searching inquisition. They discovered the residence of Anastasia, who, by reason of her exemplary life, had acquired great reputation for sanctity amongst the faithful; and accordingly, an officer, accompanied by a band of soldiers, having proceeded to the monastery, broke open the doors, and in the name of Probus, Prefect of Rome, demanded that Anastasia should be given up to them. Hereupon the good Sophia hastened to animate her disciple in the following terms: "Behold, my daughter, the time hath arrived when the Spouse calleth thee. Go, and offer thyself as a sacrifice of love to him who for thee offered himself upon the cross. Be strong and fear not; make it appear that thou art worthy of such a spouse."

The young virgin was forthwith brought before Probus, who, admiring her wonderful beauty, spoke to her with much affability, and inquired her name. She replied: "My name is Anastasia, and I have the happiness to be a Christian." "This," said the prefect, "is a bad recommendation; it overshadows thy prospects, and I would, therefore, recommend thee to abandon so odious a religion. I intend to render thee perfectly happy; but, to this end, thou must come with me to the temple, and offer sacrifice to Jove; but, if thou wilt not obey, know that the most cruel torments await thee." The saint replied: "I shall rather await these torments, and I am ready to suffer them for the love of God. Thy promises and thy threats are equally ineffectual; for the Almighty God, whom I adore, will give me strength to resist both."

At these words, so resolutely uttered, the prefect

became greatly exasperated, and commanded the saint to be buffeted upon the face; which was done with such violence that she was covered with blood, and in this state was sent back to prison. Here she manifested so much holy joy, that the tyrant's fury knew no bounds; he commanded that she should be tortured by the dislocation of all her limbs, and that her sides should be burned with lighted torches. This infliction was endured by the saint without a moan, and with so serene a countenance, that the prefect, perceiving that torture and fire moved her not, commanded the nails to be torn from her fingers, her teeth to be broken with a hammer, and her breasts to be pulled off with iron pincers. In the order of nature, she should have expired under these tortures; but the Lord so upheld her that she did nothing but bless his holy name, and upon being brought back to prison, all her wounds were miraculously cured. .3

Probus having heard this, and being informed, moreover, that the saint called his gods "gods of wood, of clay, and of metal," ordered her tongue to be pulled out by the roots. The holy virgin, upon hearing the cruel command, began to thank the Lord, and to sing his praises. The operation filled the spectators with horror, and a torrent of blood proceeded from her mouth, which completely stained her clothes. Finding herself ready to faint after the infliction, she made signs to a certain Christian, named Cyril, to give her some water; he complied, and this act of charity earned for him the crown of martyrdom.

Notwithstanding the loss of her tongue, St. Anastasia ceased not to bless the Lord, and implore of him help to consummate her sacrifice. In these prayers she frequently raised her hands to heaven, which so annoyed the tyrant that, in addition to her other torments, he had her hands and feet cut off, and finally ordered her

to be beheaded. Thus did this glorious saint enter the kingdom of Jesus Christ, with as many merits as she had suffered tortures for his sake.

The above-mentioned Cyril was also beheaded at the same time, which was on the 27th or 28th of October, about the year 249.

Surius adds, that the good Sophia, having heard the glorious end of her novice, procured the body; and with the assistance of two pious persons, buried it without the city.[1]

CHAPTER LVIII.

STS. VICTOR, OFFICER; ALEXANDER, FELICIANUS, LONGINUS, SOLDIERS, OF MARSEILLES.

July 21.

During the reign of the Emperor Maximilian the Christian religion was extensively propagated at Marseilles; in consequence of which this notable enemy of the faithful caused a great slaughter of them upon his arrival in that city. Among these was St. Victor, a military officer, and so good a Christian that he let no opportunity pass of animating the faithful, and exhorting them to suffer every torture, rather than abandon the religion of Jesus Christ. To this end he frequently visited them in their houses by night.

His zealous conduct could not long remain concealed, and he was soon arrested and brought before the prefects of the city, Asterius and Eutychius, who told him that they would obtain his pardon if he would consent *to* sacrifice to the gods, and exhorted him not to lose

[1] St. Anastasia, virgin, is often called the Elder, to distinguish her from St. Anastasia, widow. As to her relics, see note, page 174.—Ed.

his past services by being the follower of a dead man, as was Jesus Christ. Victor answered that the gods of the pagans were none other than devils, who deserved only contempt. He added, that he gloried in being a follower of that "dead man," Jesus Christ, who being the Son of God, became man, for the salvation of the world; but who, in doing so, did not cease to be God, since by his own power he rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven, where he reigns with his Father. The pagans hearing these things, which they imagined to be fables, commenced to deride him; but Victor being a nobleman, the prefects forwarded his case to the emperor for judgment.

Maximilian endeavored to intimidate him by threats; but finding that Victor disregarded them, he commanded that he should be bound hand and foot, and dragged through the streets of the city. When the saint was brought back to the prefects all torn and covered with blood, they thought that he had been daunted by the torture already suffered, and used all their exertions to make him renounce Jesus Christ; representing to him the good fortune he might enjoy by complying with the will of the emperor, and the evils which would be the consequence of his disobedience; but Victor, even more courageously than before, replied: "I have committed no crime against the emperor, nor have I failed to serve him when it was a duty. I, moreover, pray every day for his salvation; but how can it be expected that I will bring damnation upon myself by preferring temporal to eternal things? Would I not be truly mad to prefer the insignificant and transitory goods of fortune, to those which are immensely greater and never end? Is it not reasonable that I should think less of the emperor's favor than of the favor of that God who created me, and prepared for me an eternal felicity? As for the tortures which you threaten, I re-

gard them rather as so many favors conferred upon me, since they are likely to free me from eternal torments; the death which is being prepared shall be to me the entrance into life everlasting. Should I not be supposed to have lost my senses, were I to prefer your gods, who are only demons, to my God, the living and the true ?

The saint spoke at some length of the evidences of the Christian religion, the glories of Jesus Christ, and the many miracles wrought by him when on earth ; but the prefects, unwilling to hear him further, interrupted him, saying : " Now, Victor, thy words are of no avail ; either choose to appease our offended deities, or to end thy days by an ignominious death." Victor answered : "Since this is your decision, let the tortures be prepared. I despise your gods, and adore Jesus Christ."

The prefects disputed amongst themselves for some time regarding the torments to which they would subject the saints ; but it was finally resolved that he should undergo a long and painful torture suggested by Asterius, during which Jesus Christ appearing to him, said : " Be of good courage, Victor, I am with thee in the combat, to help thee, and shall be with thee in heaven to reward thee after thy triumph." The saint, consoled by this vision, endured his torments with a serene countenance, rendered thanks to God ; and, after the executioners had exhausted their strength, was cast into a dark dungeon, whither there came angels to console him, with whom he chanted the divine praises. The guards seeing the place filled with a heavenly light, cast themselves at the feet of the saint, and requested him to baptize them ; these guards were named Alexander, Longinus, and Felicianus. The saint instructed them as well as time would permit, and in the course of the night they were baptized by a priest, for whom he had sent.

On the day following, the conversion of the three guards having been made public, the emperor ordered Victor to be again tortured; and the guards, having remained faithful to the religion which they had embraced, were beheaded.

Victor having undergone the tortures, was brought before an altar of Jove, and commanded to sacrifice; but he threw it down with his foot, which was instantly cut off by order of the emperor. A mill-stone was then placed upon him, by which he was greatly bruised and crushed, but it broke to pieces before the saint expired, and his head was accordingly struck off. At the moment of his death a voice was heard from heaven, saying: "Victor, thou hast conquered !"[1]

The tyrant commanded that the bodies of the martyrs should be cast into the sea; but God so disposed it that they were cast ashore upon the opposite side of the port, so that the Christians were enabled to recover them, and place them in a grotto, where the Lord was pleased to honor them with many miracles.[2]

[1] Victor in Latin signifies a conqueror.

[2] These holy relics were preserved at Marseilles in the cathedral church and in that of St. Victor, till the revolution of 1793, the sacrilegious deeds of which deprived the Church of this treasure as well as of many others. Two celebrated abbeys bore the name of St. Victor: one of the Benedictines at Marseilles, erected at the beginning of the fifth century on the tomb of the glorious martyrs by the illustrious abbot John Cassian; the other of the regular Canons at Paris, where two distinguished authors lived, often cited by St. Alphonsus, namely, Hugo of St. Victor, a Belgian, and his disciple Richard, a Scotchman.—Ed.

CHAPTER LIX.

36, PETER, DOROTHEUS, AND GORGONIUS, CHAMBERLAINS

March 12 and September 9.

Diocletian having been greatly alarmed by a fire breaking out in 303 in his palace at Nicomedia, was told by some malevolent persons that the disaster had been caused by the Christians, who, it was said, intended to burn him alive. The emperor accordingly determined to exterminate them from the empire, and forthwith sent orders to all the governors that they should put to death all the Christians of their respective jurisdiction, without any exception whatever, and this on pain of losing not only their office, but their lives.

Galerius, the son-in-law of Diocletian, being an implacable enemy of the Christians, caused the palace to be a second time set on fire, in order the more to incite the emperor against them; he, moreover, accused the Christian officers of the palace with being the authors of the fire, alleging that their intention was to destroy both the emperors, together with the household. Diocletian's rage knew no bounds; and the first victim was one of his chamberlains, a zealous Christian named Peter, who being commanded to sacrifice or lose his life, answered: "I would rather lose my life than my religion. How can it be expected that I should sacrifice to the devils, who are our enemies ?" Having said these words, he was hoisted in the air, and most cruelly scourged upon every part of the body; after which he was taken down, and vinegar and salt being rubbed into his torn flesh, he was roasted on a gridiron, in which torture the Christian hero terminated his life.

Diocletian was aware that the lord chamberlain Doro-

theus, and Gorgonins, one of the principal officers of the household, were Christians; but as he loved them on account of their fidelity and virtue, he could not bring himself to condemn them to death. The two saints, however, had witnessed, and regarded with a kind of pious jealousy, the martyrdom of Peter; and finding themselves one day alone with the emperor, they respectfully represented to him how much he had been imposed upon by those malevolent persons, who induced him to persecute the innocent. They continued: "Whai evil hath Peter done, my lord, to merit so cruel a death? True, he was a Christian; but what subjects are there in all the empire more faithful than the Christians? If to be so be considered a crime, we are willing to die for it. But it is no crime; on the contrary, we are obliged to adore the one only true God."

After this protestation, Diocletian was wavering between his regard for the saints and his hatred of their faith: but Galerius soon caused the latter to prevail; and it was intimated to them that they should renounce their faith, or suffer death. Having refused to comply with the wishes of the emperor, they were scourged so cruelly, and their blood flowed so copiously, that the torture was suspended lest they should expire under it. However, as they were found yet alive, and firm in their resolution, they were roasted over a slow fire, upon a gridiron, and afterwards strangled. Thus on the 9th of September, in the year 302, did they consummate their sacrifice, a striking example of the love of God, and an acceptable holocaust to his honor.

Their relics were subsequently brought to Rome, and buried on the Via Latina, whence they were translated by Pope Gregory IV. to St. Peter's Church, in the year 764. Pope Paul the First granted the body of St. Gorgonius to the Bishop of Mentz, and it was again translated, in the year 1595, to Pont Mausson, where fit still remains.

CHAPTER LX.

ST. TIMOTHY, LECTOR; AND ST. MAURA, HIS WIFE.

Upon the death of the Emperor Diocletian, his successors Galerius and Maximilian continued the persecution against the Christians, and our saints were of the number of those who then obtained the crown of martyrdom. Timothy was a native of the town of Perapus in Thebais, and was so exemplary a Christian that his bishop ordained him lector. He was married to a Christian lady named Maura, only seventeen years of age; and the marriage had been solemnized but three weeks, when Arianus, the governor of the province, issued an order for the arrest of Timothy, who had been represented to him as one of the greatest enemies of the gods. When the latter was presented, Arianus said to him: "Art thou not aware of the edicts of the emperors against those who refuse to sacrifice to the idols?" Timothy answered: "I am aware of them, but will rather lay down my life than commit such an act of impiety." "Then," said the governor, "we shall put thee to the torture, and hear how thou wilt speak during the infliction." The saint resolutely refused to comply, and the barbarous tyrant caused burning irons to be put into his ears, until the violence of the pain caused his eyes to start from their sockets.

After this horrible torture Timothy commenced to return thanks to the Lord; whereupon the tyrant, more infuriated than before, ordered him to be suspended by the feet, with a large stone tied to his neck, and a kind of bridle on his mouth to prevent him from speaking. Seeing, however, that torments had no effect upon Timothy, he sent for Maura, and told her that she alone

could save her husband from death, as by her tears she might induce him to sacrifice to the gods. She went accordingly to the place, and seeing him in so piteous a condition, endeavored to induce him to abandon the faith. Timothy, whose mouth had been unbridled that he might answer his wife, replied: "How is it possible, O Maura, that, being thyself a Christian, instead of animating me to die for the faith, thou dost tempt me to abandon it; and thus, to obtain a short and miserable existence here, expose myself to the never-ending pains of hell? Is this, then, thy love?"

Maura was instantly converted by this rebuke; and, casting herself on her knees, besought Jesus Christ, with many penitent tears, to forgive her. She then asked pardon of her husband, and exhorted him to remain firm in his profession of faith, expressing at the same time a desire to sacrifice her life in atonement for her fault, and be the happy companion of his martyrdom. Timothy, much consoled by the repentance of his wife, told her that her last words had caused him to forget his past sufferings, and that she should forthwith return to the governor to retract her first step, and to express her desire of dying for Jesus Christ. Maura at first was afraid to trust her own weakness; but Timothy prayed for her so effectually, that the Lord granted her grace and strength to execute the orders of her pious husband.

The governor, surprised at her sudden change, endeavored to dissuade her from her holy purpose, by promising to obtain for her an advantageous match upon her husband's death, but Maura replied that after his death she would have no other spouse than Jesus Christ. Hereupon Arianus caused her hair to be violently pulled out and her fingers cut off; after which she was immersed in a caldron of boiling water, from which, however, she came out uninjured. Arianus was

much affected by this miracle, and it contributed much to his conversion, which happened a few days after. Before the martyrdom of the saints, however, he had not that happiness; and, lest he should be remiss in executing the orders of the emperor, he caused the saint to be tortured with burning sulphur and pitch, after which she was sentenced to be crucified, together with her husband.

While she was proceeding to the place of execution, her mother, shedding many tears, embraced her; but the saint, freeing herself from her parent's embrace, hastened to the cross. The husband and wife were crucified one opposite to the other; and in order that their agonies might be prolonged, they were not strangled. They continued to live in this state for some days, during which time they ceased not to bless the Lord, and to encourage each other with the hope that they would soon be united to Jesus Christ in heaven. These two saints obtained the crown of their glorious martyrdom on the 19th December, in the beginning of the fourth century.

Their festival is kept by the Greeks, and also by the Muscovites. There was a church at Constantinople dedicated to God in honor of these martyrs.

CHAPTER LXI.

SS. SIXTUS II., POPE; LAURENCE, DEACON; ROMANUS, SOLDIER.

August 6, 9, and 10.

From the sacramentary of St. Leo it would appear that St. Laurence was by birth a Roman citizen, but was probably a Spaniard by descent; yet some authors

state that he was born in Spain, and that he came to Rome when very young. St. Peter Chrysologus observes, that though poor in earthly possessions, he was rich in heavenly gifts, for which reason Pope St. Sixtus conceived a great affection for him, and not only regarded him as one of his most beloved disciples, but promoted him to deacon's orders, placed him over seven other deacons, and appointed him his treasurer and almoner.

The Emperor Valerian was, at the beginning of his reign, rather favorable to the Christians, but in the year 258 he raised a fierce persecution against them, which was particularly directed against the bishops and clergy. St. Sixtus was accordingly one of the first who was arrested; as he was preparing to celebrate the divine mysteries in the cemetery of Calixtus, he was loaded with chains and conducted to prison. St. Laurence, having heard of his arrest, went to see him, and as St. Ambrose relates,[1] addressed him in the following manner: "Whither dost thou go, Father, without thy deacon? What hast thou seen in me to displease thee, and which could induce thee to abandon me? Dost thou doubt me; let me have some trial before I am thus cast off?" St. Sixtus replied: "No, my son, I abandon thee not; a trial greater than mine, in testimony of the faith of Jesus Christ, awaits thee. The Lord, in consideration of the weakness of my age, exposes me to a less arduous struggle; but greater torments and a more glorious victory are reserved for thee. Go; and instantly distribute amongst the poor the treasures of the church, and prepare thyself for martyrdom." St. Laurence, inflamed as he was with the desire of martyrdom, received great consolation from these words, and lost no time disposing of the sacred vessels and vestments of the church, and dis-

[1] *De Officiis,* l. 1, c. 41.

tributing the money among the poor. He then returned to the prison, to visit the Holy Father, and finding him about to be led to the place of execution to be beheaded, he informed him that he had complied with his orders, and casting himself at his feet, implored his benedic-tion, in the hope of shortly following his footsteps. St. Sixtus was beheaded, August 6, in the year 258.

The prefect of Rome, having been informed that St. Laurence held the property of the church, sent for him, and required him to deliver it up, alleging that the emperor needed it for the payment of the army. The saint composedly replied that he should be allowed some time, and that he would then show him how rich the church was. Within eight days the saint was enabled to assemble all the poor who had received succor from the church funds, and going to the prefect said to him: "Come, and thou shalt see the treasures of our church." The prefect, finding only an assemblage of paupers, looked furiously upon the holy deacon, who said to him: "My lord, thou art angered; but remember, that silver and gold and precious stones are but dross extracted from the earth, but the riches of the Christians are the poor, whom the property of the Church supports." The prefect, finding his avarice baffled by the saint, com-manded him to renounce Jesus Christ; and finding his faith immovable, ordered that he should be scourged with rods as a slave. At the same time he was threat-ened with greater torments unless he consented to sacri-fice to the gods; but Laurence protested that he was willing to undergo any punishment rather than worship deities who were worthy of nothing but contempt. The prefect then sent him to prison, in charge of Hippolytus, an officer of the guards. Hippolytus was struck with the intrepidity, the conduct, and the language of the saint, and began to conceive a species of veneration for him, but the miracles which he subsequently wrought in

prison affected his conversion. Amongst these was the cure of a blind man named Lucilius, whose sight was restored by the saint's touching his eyes; upon witnessing this miracle, Hippolytus requested to be baptized.

On the following day the prefect summoned the saint before him, and endeavored by promises and threats to make him renounce Jesus Christ. All his exertions proving useless, he commanded him to be stretched upon the rack until all his bones were dislocated, and his flesh to be torn by scourges armed with iron points. The saint believed that he was about to expire under this torture, for he prayed to the Lord to receive his soul; but he heard a voice which intimated to him that his triumph was not yet complete, and that other tortures were reserved for him. It is recorded by some writers that this voice was heard by all, even the prefect, who exclaimed: "Heed not the voice of the demons who wait upon this sorcerer." At the same, a soldier named Romanus saw an angel in the form of a beautiful youth, who wiped away the blood which flowed from the wounds of the holy martyr, and being converted by this vision, approached St. Laurence, and intimated to him his desire to be baptized. The saint could not then comply with his wish; but the emperor, understanding that Laurence still persisted, ordered that he should be sent to prison, and there undergo still greater tortures.

Romanus procured a vessel of water, and entering the prison of St. Laurence received the necessary instructions, the sacrament of regeneration, and exhortations to prepare himself for martyrdom, which he received with great joy on the 9th of August, the day immediately preceding the triumph of our saint.

The prefect again summoned Laurence to his presence, and asked him: "Why dost thou so insolently despise our gods?" The saint replied: "Because they are false gods; reason itself dictates that the true God can be

only one." Upon these words the tyrant caused his jaws to be broken by blows of a stone, and ordered him to be stretched upon a red-hot gridiron, under which a slow fire was placed, in order that his torture might be the more prolonged and painful. But these cruel torments seemed only to increase the intrepidity of the saint, who, perceiving that one side was completely roasted, said to the tyrant: "If thou wilt feed upon my flesh, thou mayest turn me and eat, as one side is done." He then raised his eyes to heaven, and manifesting the joy with which he died, placidly rendered his soul to God, on the 10th of August, in the year 258.

Hippolytus and a priest named Justin took his body and buried it in a cave in Agro Verano; upon the spot a famous church was afterwards erected. Indeed, there are innumerable churches dedicated to God in his honor throughout Christendom; almost all the holy Fathers have celebrated his triumph, and Prudentius[1] attributes the conversion of Rome principally to the martyrdom of this great saint. His name has been inserted [a] the Canon of the Mass.'

[1] *Peristcph. hymn.* 3.

[a] Alban Butler and Giry cite several churches in France that possessed relics of St. Laurence, but it is probable that they possess them no longer in consequence of the outrages of the Calvinists of the ifxh century, and of the revolutionists of 1793.

We read in the annals of Erstein, in Alsace, that the Empress Irmengard, the wife of Lothair I., obtained from Pope Leo IV., about the year 850, the body of St. Sixtus II., and that he had it buried in the abbey of Erstein, the church of which bore the name of this holy Pope.

The relics of St. Romanus were transferred to Lucca, where they are kept under the high altar of the church that bears his name.—Ed.

CHAPTER LXII.

SS. SEBASTIAN, OFFICER; AND THE TWO BROTHERS, MARCUS AND MARCELLIANUS.

January 29 and June 18.

This saint was born of Christian parents, who dwelt at Narbonne, in Languedoc, but were natives of Milan. St. Ambrose[1] relates that, by reason of his extraordinary talents and exemplary conduct, our saint was much beloved by Diocletian, who appointed him captain of the first company of his guards. Sebastian employed the emoluments of his station in the relief of the poor; he was indefatigable in assisting his brother Christians, and particularly those who languished in prison, whom he not only relieved with alms, but encouraged to suffer for Jesus Christ. He was consequently considered the main prop of the persecuted faithful.

At this time it happened that the two brothers, Marcus and Marcellianus, Roman knights, who had suffered tortures with considerable constancy, were being led to death, when their father, Tarquillinus, and their mother, Marcia, accompanied by the wives and children of the two confessors, obtained from the judge, Cromatius, by tears and entreaties, that the sentence should be deferred for thirty days. It is easy to imagine what wailings and entreaties were used by their relatives during the respite in order to induce the two brothers to prevaricate; indeed, they were so importunate and unceasing, that they who had already confessed the faith began now to vacillate. But Sebastian, knowing them, ran instantly to their assistance, and God's blessing so

[1] *Ada .s'. Sebast. apud Boll.*

accompanied his words, that he induced them to receive with joy a most cruel death; for they were obliged to hang nailed by the feet to a gallows for a day and a night before they were transfixed with a lance. Nor was this all: the zealous captain likewise converted to the faith not only all the above-named relatives of Marcus and Marcellianus, but also Nicostratus, an officer of Cromatius, Claudius, the provost of the prison, and sixty-four prisoners, who were idolaters.

But the most remarkable conversion was that of Cromatius himself, who, hearing that Tarquillinus had embraced the faith, sent for him and said: "Hast thou then turned mad in the last days of thy life?" The good old man replied: " On the contrary, by embracing the Christian faith I have become wise, for it is wisdom to prefer an everlasting life to the few wretched days that await me in this world." He then persuaded him to have an interview with St. Sebastian, who quickly persuaded him of the truth of the Christian religion; and Cromatius, having received baptism, with his entire family, and one thousand four hundred slaves, to whom he granted their freedom, renounced his office, and retired to his country house.

Fabian, the successor of Cromatius, having learned that Sebastian not only exhorted the Christians to remain steadfast in the faith, but procured also the conversion of the pagans, reported the fact to the emperor, who sent for our saint, and upbraided him with the crime of perverting his subjects. Sebastian answered that he considered he was rendering the greatest possible service to the emperor, since the state benefited by having Christian subjects, whose fidelity to their sovereign is proportionate to their devotedness to Jesus Christ. The emperor, enraged at this reply, ordered that the saint should be instantly tied to a post, and that a body of archers should discharge their arrows

upon him. The sentence was immediately executed, and Sebastian was left for dead; but a holy widow, named Irene, went at night to bury him, and finding him yet alive, brought him to her house, where he recovered. After this the saint went to the emperor, and said to him: "How long, O Prince, wilt thou believe the calumnies that have been spread against the Christians? I have returned to tell thee again that thou hast not in the empire subjects more faithful than the Christians, who by their prayers obtain for thee all thy prosperity."

Diocletian, surprised to see the saint still living, exclaimed: "How is it that thou art yet alive?" Sebastian answered: "The Lord has been pleased to preserve my life that I might admonish thee of thy impiety in persecuting the Christians."

The emperor, irritated at the admonition, ordered that the saint should be scourged to death. This sentence being executed, he expired on the 20th January, about the year 228.

The pagans threw the body of the martyr into a marsh, but a holy lady named Lucina caused it to be taken thence, and buried it at the entrance of a cemetery which is now called the "Catacombs of St. Sebastian."

CHAPTER LXIII.

SS. CYRIACUS, LARGUS, AND SMARAGDUS.

March 17 and August 8.

The vanity of the Emperor Diocletian incited him to build a palace which would be one of the wonders of the world; and in truth he succeeded in erecting nt

Rome a stupendous fabric, where he placed the baths, afterwards called "Le Terme Diocleziane," the vestiges of which are still visible. Amongst the many punishments which the intense hatred of this emperor directed against the Christians was that of obliging them to assist in the erection of this palace. Multitudes of them were there to be seen rolling stones, digging the foundations, and carrying lime and water; and as his barbarous intention was to make them die of fatigue, they were obliged to labor unceasingly, and without sufficient food.

An opulent and noble Roman, named Thraso, who privately practised the Christian religion, regarding with compassion these confessors of Christ, employed three of his friends who were zealous Christians, namely, Cyriacus, Largus, and Smaragdus, in relieving their necessities and in encouraging them to endure their trials for the love of Jesus Christ. Pope St. Marcellinus having been informed of their many acts of virtue, promoted Cyriacus to the order of deacon, in order that he might the more effectually carry on the holy work.

The saints were ultimately detected carrying food to the Christians, and were immediately arrested and condemned to labor at the building; but here they so distinguished themselves by their charity and zeal, that they were accused before Maximian, the colleague of Diocletian, who being no less cruel, caused them to be arrested and led to prison, where the Lord wrought many miracles by them. Some persons who had been blind recovered their sight when Cyriacus blessed them with the sign of the cross, and many others, afflicted with various diseases, came to the prison, and were by the same means restored to health. The saints availed themselves of these opportunities to inculcate the truths of Christianity, and induced many to embrace the faith.

The fame of these miracles at last reached the court.

and a daughter of Diocletian, named Arthemia, being possessed by a devil, from which she suffered much, declared that she could not be cured except through the intercession of the deacon Cyriacus. The emperor being induced by the great love which he bore his daughter, sent to the prison for Cyriacus, who, having prayed over the princess, and commanded the devil to depart from her, received the following answer: "I obey, because I cannot resist the power of Jesus Christ; but I shall proceed to the court of the King of Persia." The saint observed: "All shall ultimately be to the glory oi Christ, and to thy confusion." The young lady was immediately freed from the evil spirit, and boldly manifested her intention of becoming a Christian.

Meanwhile the daughter of the King of Persia, named Jobia, was possessed by the same evil spirit, and exclaimed that she could not be relieved unless by the deacon Cyriacus, who was at Rome. The king immediately sent an ambassador to request of Diocletian that Cyriacus should be sent to him. The emperor accordingly despatched the deacon and his two companions, and upon their arrival in Persia, Cyriacus declared to the king, that in order to see his daughter relieved from the evil spirit, he should embrace the faith of Jesus Christ. The king consented; the princess was cured, and the monarch and his daughter, with four hundred pagans, received the sacrament of baptism. The king was desirous that the saints should remain in his dominions; but, anxious for the glory of martyrdom, they insisted upon returning to Rome. On their arrival there they labored indefatigably in assisting Khe persecuted Christians, and Diocletian tolerated their proceedings.

When the emperor left Rome, his colleague, Maximian, whose hatred to the Christians was ungovernable, caused our saints to be arrested, and intimated to his lieutenant, Carpasius, that they should either sacrifice.

or be themselves sacrificed, to the gods. The saints expressed their horror at the proposal, and Cyriacus said : "How can we sacrifice to the gods, who are only demons of hell?" Carpasius caused boiling pitch to be poured upon his head, and then had him stretched upon a rack, and beaten with clubs ; but the saint suffered these tortures, not only with patience, but with thanks to Jesus Christ, who rendered him worthy to suffer these tortures for his sake. Maximian, perceiving that the heroism oi the saints could not be overcome by tortures, caused them to be beheaded, with twenty other martyrs, on the 16th of March, in the year 303.

Their bodies were buried near the place of their martyrdom, upon the road called *Via Salaria,* but those of our three saints were shortly afterwards translated by Pope St. Marcellus, to the farm of a Christian lady named Lucina, on the Ostian way.

CHAPTER LXIV.

SS. mammas; theodotus, his father; rufina, his mother; AND AMYA.

August 17 and 31.

St. Mammas was born in Paphlagonia, a town of Asia Minor, now called Bolli, and situated between Pontus Euxinus and Galatia. He was the son of Theodotus and Rufina, both noble and exemplary Christians.[1] The

[1] This is the account given by Surius, who quotes Metaphrastes ; but it is far more probable that our saint's parents, however virtuous, were poor. St. Gregory Nazianzen concludes one of his sermons with an allusion to the saint, and calls him "the renowned Mammas, a shepherd and a martyr." St. Basil also has an admirable homily upon this blessed martyr, who seems to have been celebrated among the Greeks. Th?

persecution against the Christians was raging in this province, and Theodotus was arrested and sent to prison by Alexander, the governor of the town, who, however, not having authority to inflict capital punishments, and finding Theodotus persevering in his profession of the faith, sent him to Faustus, governor of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, whither Rufina, although pregnant, accompanied him. It was intimated to Theodotus, on being presented to the cruel Faustus, that he should either obey the emperor, or be prepared to undergo tortures 'that would finally cause his death. The pious confessor replied that it was his desire to die for Jesus Christ ; but being taken ill on account of the want of food and the fatigue of his journey, which was on foot, he was sent to prison, where he ended his days in a holy manner. Rufina was his companion in death, for she prematurely gave birth to her child, and died the day following.

A rich and noble Christian widow, named Amya, while engaged in holy prayer, was favored with the vision of an angel, who intimated to her that she should take care of the orphan infant who was in prison. The good lady obtained from the governor a legal possession of the child, whom she called Mammas, at baptism. The boy, as he grew up, made considerable progress in human learning, but still greater in the science of the saints, and

object of the homily is to show that poverty and humility constitute real glory ; and that, although custom may warrant the profane panegyrist in extolling the character of a person by referring to the nobility of his birth and to the glorious achievements of his ancestors, yet the laws of truth shall forever prohibit us from praising any one except for his own virtues. The holy Father insists that our saint was but a poor shepherd, who could boast of no worldly distinction ; and indeed the reader is inclined to suspect that he was anxious to contradict some apocryphal accounts that would attribute noble ancestry to St. Mammas, for he emphatically says, " Yes, a shepherd ! Let us not be ashamed of the truth. Let us not imitate the profane writers of fable. —St. Basil horn, xxiii. *in Marnant, martyr*

a holy zeal for the advancement of the Christian religion; so much so, that at twelve years of age he under, took the task of making converts to the faith of Jesus Christ. Meanwhile the good Amya died, leaving him heir to all her riches, which, however, he quickly distributed among the poor. Faustus also died, and was succeeded in the government by Democritus, an implacable enemy of the Christians, who arrived at Cæsarea; and, having heard of the zeal and energy with which the young Mammas labored for the increase of the faithful, summoned him to his presence, and said: "How is it possible that, being so learned thou art anxious to follow the Christian sect, which is proscribed throughout the empire? Come with me to offer sacrifice at the temple of Jove, and I will not fail to use my interest with the emperor for thy advancement." The holy youth replied: "However grateful, my lord, for thy very kind opinion regarding my learning, I should feel myself unworthy of being esteemed wise were I to sacrifice to any creature, knowing as I do that there is but one only God. If I were to give the honors due to the emperor to one of his vassals, would I not become guilty of treason? How then can I sacrifice to thy gods, who are none other than devils?"

Democritus, enraged at this answer, ordered Mammas to be put to the torture; but the saint observed that, being the adopted son of a noble woman, it was not in the governor's power to authorize the execution of such a sentence. Democritus therefore reported all the circumstances to the Emperor Aurelian, who commanded that the saint should be brought before him, and upon his appearance addressed him thus: "I wish, my son, to employ thee at court, but thou must therefore abandon the Christian faith. Choose, then, a happy life at my palace, or an ignominious death upon the scaffold." Mammas replied: "The choice, O prince, is alreadj

made: thou dost propose unto me a death which shall render me forever happy, or a short life that must make me eternally miserable." The emperor asked: "And from whom, if not from our gods, canst thou expect this everlasting bliss?" "No," rejoined Mammas, "thy gods which are but deaf and blind statues, can confer no favor upon me. I adore the one only true God, and for him I am most willing to lay down my life. To be permitted to do so I would esteem the greatest possible happiness."

This conversation so irritated Aurelian, that he commanded the saint's body to be torn with scourges: yet Mammas endured this torture without a groan; and the emperor, who appeared moved by the horrid infliction, said, in a tone of entreaty: "Mammas, merely say with thy mouth that thou wilt sacrifice." The saint replied: "It would displease my God were I to deny him with my heart or with my tongue. Continue to torture me as long as it pleaseth thee. The executioners shall sooner tire than I." This expression exasperated Aurelian, and he commanded that the saint's flesh should be burned with torches, which, however, by God's permission, burned not the saint, but those who held them. The emperor perceiving this, ordered that he should be cast into the sea; but while he was being led thither, an angel, appearing in the form of a young man, put the guards to flight, and intimated to Mammas that he should retire to a mountain in the neighborhood of Caesarea; the saint accordingly dwelt in that solitude for forty days.

A new governor was appointed to Caesarea, and having been informed that there lived on the adjoining mountain a Christian whom the emperor had condemned to death, he sent a troop of cavalry to seize him. The soldiers having met the saint, without knowing him to be the object of their pursuit, asked him if he knew in

which part of the mountain Mammas dwelt. The saint replied that he could show them his abode, and led them to his hut, which was instantly surrounded by a troop of wild beasts. The soldiers being alarmed hereat, the saint said: "Fear not: these creatures come to nourish me with their milk. I am Mammas, whom you seek; return to town, and I will follow you." The soldiers were too much alarmed not to obey the saint; and on their return informed the governor of what had happened. The holy martyr soon presented himself before the governor, who said to him: "Art thou the wizard that by the magical arts of the Christians dost tame wild beasts ?" The saint answered: "I am a servant of Jesus Christ, λνΐιο protects his servants, and condemns to eternal fire those that confide in idols. For the rest, know that the practice of magic, of which you falsely accuse us, is unknown to Christians. Thou hast sent for me; what is thy will?" The governor replied: "Thou art a rash man, opposing, as thou dost, the edicts of the emperor; but torments shall alter thee."

The tyrant then ordered that the saint should be stretched upon the rack, and scourged; but as he evinced considerable fortitude, the governor threatened to have him burned alive, and accordingly sent him to prison. St. Mammas here found forty Christians who had been incarcerated for the faith, and being moved to compassion, prayed for them; whereupon the gates of the prison opened of themselves, and these holy confessors were thus restored to liberty.

The miracle converted some pagans, but increased the fury of the tyrant, who ordered that Mammas should be bound hand and foot and cast into a furnace. The fire, however, touched not a hair of his head, but merely burned his bonds, and during his stay in the fire he ceased not to bless the Lord. The saint after this trial prayed for the termination of his martyrdom; and being

cut down by the swords of the executioners, went to receive the reward of his many victories, in the year 275, which was the last year of Aurelian's reign.

Surius has written the life of this saint, who has always been regarded by the Greeks as one of their most glorious martyrs. During the reign of Constantine a church was built over his tomb at Cæsarea, and other churches have been erected to his honor throughout Christendom.'

CHAPTER LXV.

SS. JANUARIUS, BISHOP OF BENEVENTO; SOSIUS, PROCULUS, FESTUS, DEACONS; DIDIER, LECTOR; EUTYCHES, ACUTIUS.

September 19.

Naples and Benevento both claim the honor of having given birth to Januarius; he is said to have been descended of the ancient family of the Sanniti, who had made war with the Romans, and were masters and dukes of Benevento. There are no historical records of the first years of St. Januarius, but it is certain that his parents were Christians, and that he was esteemed the most learned and pious of the clergy, for which reason he was unanimously chosen bishop of Benevento, upon a vacancy having occurred in that see. The humility of the saint induced him most resolutely to refuse that dig-

[1] St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, and many other celebrated authors eulogize St. Mammas. Alban Butler or Godescard, and Giry, assure us that his head was translated from Constantinople to Langres at the beginning of the 13th century, and deposited in the cathedral that took this holy martyr as its chief patron and titular saint.—Ed.

nity, until he was obliged to accept it by a command from the Pope, who was at that time St. Cains, or St. Marcellinus.

Our saint undertook the government of his church during the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian, which circumstance gave him noble opportunities of manifesting the extent of his zeal for the faith of Jesus Christ. Not content with propagating and maintaining the faith in his own diocese, he ran through the neighboring cities converting pagans, and assisting and encouraging the faithful.

In the discharge of these duties he became acquainted with a holy deacon of the city of Miseno, named Sosius, with whom he formed a most intimate friendship; for as Sosius was one day reading the Gospel to the people, St. Januarius saw a most resplendent flame upon his head, from which fact he predicted that the pious deacon would be crowned with martyrdom. The prophecy was soon fulfilled; for after a few days Sosius was arrested as a Christian, and brought before Dracontius, governor of the district, who having in vain endeavored with promises and threats to make him prevaricate, caused him to be cruelly scourged, tortured, and sent to prison. He was here frequently visited by the Christians, but the deacon Proculus, and his fellow-citizens Eutyches and Acutius, were particularly attentive to him; and St. Januarius was no sooner apprised of his arrest than he repaired to the prison to comfort and encourage him.

Meanwhile Dracontius was removed to another place by the emperor, and succeeded in the government by Timothy, who upon his arrival at Nola, having heard of the preaching of St. Januarius, and the assistance which he afforded to the faithful in the neighborhood, ordered him to be arrested and brought before him, bound hand and foot. On being presented to the new governor,

our saint was commanded to sacrifice, but immediately rejected the iniquitous proposal with horror and contempt; whereupon Timothy ordered him to be thrown into a furnace. The order was instantly executed, but the saint received not the least hurt; and although this miraculous preservation excited the wonder of all present, it was so far from making any salutary impression on the tyrant, that it rendered him more furious and cruel than before, and he accordingly ordered that the saint's body should be stretched upon the rack until his every nerve should be broken.

As soon as these proceedings were known at Beneventto, Festus, the bishop's deacon, and Desiderius, his lector, forthwith departed to visit their holy prelate in the name of his entire flock; but Timothy being informed of their arrival at Nola, caused them to be arrested, and their depositions to be taken regarding the motives of their journey. They answered that, holding as they did subordinate offices in the church of the good bishop, they thought it their duty to visit their Superior in prison, and minister to him whatever assistance it might be in their power to afford. Upon hearing this declaration the tyrant commanded that they should be loaded with chains, and made to walk before his chariot to Puzzuoli, to be there delivered to wild beasts together with their pastor.

Immediately after their arrival they were exposed in the amphitheatre, when St. Januarius said to the rest: "Be of good heart, brethren ! Behold, the day of our triumph has arrived. Let us confidently give our lives for Jesus Christ, who vouchsafed to give his for us." The beasts were let loose upon them, in the presence of a great multitude; but although they ran towards the martyrs as it were to devour them, they cast themselves before them and licked their feet. The miracle was evident to all, and a deep murmur was heard to run through

the amphitheatre: "The God of the Christians is the only true God."

The effect produced by this miracle made Timothy fear a general sedition, and he accordingly gave orders that the martyrs should be led to the public square and beheaded; but St. Januarius, in passing the governor, prayed that the Lord might strike him blind, for his own confusion and the conversion of the people. This prayer having taken instant effect, the tyrant delayed the execution of the sentence, and besought the holy bishop to forgive the maltreatment he had received, and to pray for the restoration of his sight. St. Januarius did so, and the miracle was followed by the conversion of five thousand pagans; but Timothy, fearing lest he should lose the favor of the emperor, ordered his officers to have the last sentence privately but instantly executed.

While our saint was being led to Vulcano, the place selected for his last struggle, an aged Christian followed him, imploring with many tears that he would give him something to keep for his sake; the good bishop, moved by the devotion of the old man, told him that he had nothing to give, except his handkerchief, which, as he needed it to bandage his eyes in receiving the stroke of death, he could not let him have until after his martyrdom. On arriving at Vulcano, St. Januarius tied the handkerchief over his eyes, and repeating the words, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," he was decapitated on the 19th of September, towards the close of the third century, together with his companions, Sosius, Festus, Proculus, Desiderius, Eutyches, and Acutius.

The relics of these holy martyrs were afterwards translated to different cities. Puzzuoli was favored with the bodies of SS. Proculus, Eutyches, and Acutius; while Benevento was honored with those of SS. Festus

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and Desiderius; that of St. Sosius was removed to Miseno. The body of St. Januarius was first deposited at Benevento, and afterwards at the Monastery of Monte· Virgine, until during the pontificate of Alexander IV., St. Severus, bishop of Naples, accompanied by the Neapolitan clergy and a great concourse of the laity, translated it to Naples, and placed it in a church dedicated to God in his honor. From this church, however, which was without the city, the relics of St. Januarius were again translated to the cathedral, together with two vials of his blood, and have been there objects of great religious veneration for fourteen centuries. The Neapolitans honor this saint as the principal patron of their city and nation, and the Lord himself has continued to honor him, by allowing many miracles to be wrought through his intercession, particularly when the frightful eruptions of Mount Vesuvius have threatened the city of Naples with utter destruction. While the relics of St. Januarius were being brought in procession towards this terrific volcano, the torrents of lava and liquid fire which it emitted have ceased, or turned their course from the city.

But the most stupendous miracle, and that which is greatly celebrated in the church, is the liquefying and boiling up of this blessed martyr's blood whenever the vials are brought in sight of his head. This miracle is renewed many times in the year, in presence of all who desire to witness it; yet some heretics have endeavored to throw a doubt upon its genuineness, by frivolous and incoherent explanations; but no one can deny the effect to be miraculous, unless he be prepared to question the evidence of his senses.

All the facts related about St. Januarius are drawn from trustworthy sources, such as the Acts possessed by Baronius, the Greek Acts of the Vatican, the Greek Menology of Basil, the writing of John Diacono, an

author of great credit, who lived in the ninth century, and whom Muratori himself praises. To this must be added the very ancient Offices of Naples, Salerno, Capua, and Puzzuoli, and finally the tradition of Nola, where is yet shown at the present day the prison in which the saint was shut up, the place where his bones were dislocated, and the furnace from which he came forth unhurt. These records contain nearly all that we have related: all, or nearly all, are written in the Acts of Baronius, which, resting on other records, deserve our entire confidence.

I repeat here what I have said at the beginningof this book, that it seems to be a kind of temerity to wish to doubt positively about the truth of the facts related by several ancient authors, though they may not be contemporaneous—authors grave and careful to examine into things, especially when these facts are supported by an uncontroverted and ancient tradition.

It is true that we should justly doubt ancient facts against the authenticity of which we may allege some solid reason; but I ask here, which are the arguments that Tillemont, Baillet, and some other modern authors oppose to the facts of the martyrdom of St. Januarius? They say that this antiquity removes them too far from our time; that the tortures related are too violent, and therefore incredible; that these facts are too numerous. They also add other similar objections which are groundless, and which I pass over in silence for brevity's sake. To all these difficulties I reply, that by following this method we should have to reject many Acts that are commonly regarded as genuine, such as those of St. Felix of Nola, of St. Carpus, of St. Theodotus and of St. Tarachus, and many others that we read of in the celebrated Ruinart, and in a host of other good authors.

Some of our writers have approved of what is said by Tillemont and Baillet, because of certain Acts of St. Januarius that were found at Bologna with the Celestin Fathers in the monastery of St. Stephan. But I do not see why we should put faith in these Acts, and not in those of Baronins and of other authors mentioned above. They say with Tillemont that the Acts of Bologna are more simple, because in them no mention is made of the miracles described in the Acts of Baronius, and should therefore the former be preferred to the latter?

Allow me to make here a painful reflection. The present age is called the *age of light,* because it has a better taste and a more correct judgment of things. But would to God that it had not degenerated in many things, and that it were not growing worse by wishing to subject divine things to be estimated by our feeble intelligence! Some of these who are learned in this fashion deny or call in question most of the miracles related in the lives of the saints; they say that the account of these miracles only makes heretics laugh at the too great credulity of the Catholics, and for this reason refuse to be united to our Church. I answer: Heretics do not wish to believe our miracles, not because they esteem us too credulous, but because among them no miracles are ever seen; this explains why they despise our miracles. And it is by no means true that our too great facility in believing in miracles hinders them from being united to our Church, for it is precisely because they do not wish to unite with our Church, and to submit to her that they refuse to believe in miracles. These unfortunate people do not see that in refusing to submit to the Church they reduce themselves to a state of believing in nothing, as evidently appears from the books that often reach us from the so-called reformed countries. Moreover, they know that the Christian faith was propagated and maintained by means of miracles—just as

Jesus Christ and the Apostles propagated it; and the reason of this is clear. For as the revealed truths which are the object of our faith are not of themselves evident to the eyes of our mind, it was necessary to induce us to believe them by means of miracles, which surpassing the forces ol nature aid us to know clearly that it is God who speaks to us in the midst of these prodigies. Thus in proportion to the persecutions raised against the Church has the Lord multiplied miracles. In short, the miracles wrought more or less frequently by God through his servants have never been wanting in our Church.

Let us return to our subject. It is not therefore just to prefer the Acts of the Monastery of Bologna to all those that we have quoted, because they are more simple, and because they do not comprise all the miracles ie-lated by Baronius, Diacono, and other authors. Besides, these Acts of Bologna, if carefully examined, date only from the sixteenth century. Again, another well-in-formed author, Xavier Rossi, in a learned dissertation, assures us that these Acts should be regarded as less trustworthy than those that we have followed, since they are encumbered with other narratives that are false, or at least improbable, and since it has become known that they were written by an ignorant person, who collected them without discretion, and in writing committed many faults against the Latin grammar.

CHAPTER LXVI.

ST. FAITH, virgin; st. caprais, st. primus, and st. FELICIAN.

October 6 and 20.

St. Faith was born at Agen, in Aquitaine, of one of the most illustrious and Christian families of the province. She had from her most tender years dedicated herself to Jesus Christ; and having heard of the many glorious victories obtained by the martyrs during the persecution which was still raging, she conceived a most ardent desire to be made a partaker of their triumph; nor was the object of her yearnings long delayed.

Dacian, whose cruelty has obtained for him an infamous celebrity, was then prefect of Aquitaine; and as the Christian religion was generally professed at Agen, he determined to repair thither, in order that his presence might render the slaughter of the faithful more complete. The news of his intended visit struck terror into the Christians, and the adjoining woods and caverns were peopled with the former inhabitants of Agen. St. Faith was also pressed to seek safety in flight, but she refused to depart from the city, saying that she could not think of losing the fine opportunity that God had given her of dying for his love.

Upon the arrival of Dacian she learned that he had received information regarding her, and of her own accord presented herself before him. The tyrant being aware of her noble birth, and admiring her intrepidity, asked her name and religion in a mild tone. The saint answered: "My name is Faith, and I wish to be in real-

ity that which my name implies. I am therefore a Christian, and entirely consecrated to Jesus Christ, my Saviour."

The prefect said: "Abandon, my child, the superstition of the Christians. Have some regard for thy rank and thy youth. I promise to make thee the first lady of the province. Go, therefore, and sacrifice to Diana, and upon coming out from the temple thou shalt receive the rich reward I have destined for thee." St. Faith returned the following animated answer: "From my infancy I have known that all the gods whom thou worshippest are devils; and dost thou expect that I can be persuaded to offer them sacrifice? The Lord preserve me from such impiety! There is but one true God, to whom I am willing to sacrifice my life. All thy promises and gifts shall never make me abandon my religion.

Dacian in a rage said: "How dost thou presume to call our gods 'devils'? Instantly resolve to sacrifice, or to expire under torments." The saint with increased courage replied: "Know, sir, that I am not only prepared to suffer all tortures for the love of my God, but I am impatient to give him this proof of my fidelity." The tyrant then gave orders that the saint should be roasted alive upon a gridiron; but while the barbarous sentence was being executed, the pagans themselves were horror-struck, and proclaimed aloud that it w'as too cruel so to torture a young woman for no other crime than that of being faithful to the God whom she adored.

Meanwhile St. Caprais, a pious young man, who was one of the Christians that had retired to the mountain, beheld from an eminence the martyrdom of St. Faith, and was favored with a vision, in which be saw a white dove bearing a rich crown and placing it on the head of the martyr, at the same time moving his wings, as if to

draw down the rain which extinguished the fire. St, Caprais was by this vision inflamed with the desire of martyrdom; but, irresolute as to how he should act, he prayed to the Lord to manifest to him whether he was called to that honor. Upon entering his cave he saw a vein of water issuing from a stone; and interpreting this miracle as a call to martyrdom, he left the cave to present himself before the prefect.

Being asked by Dacian who he was, Caprais replied, "I am a Christian;" but the prefect perceiving him to be a youth of very pleasing appearance, called him apart, and used all his arts of persuasion to pervert him. The young Christian continuing resolute in his profession of faith, was, by order of the tyrant, stretched upon the rack and torn with iron hooks. During his tortures Caprais spoke of the truths of the Christian religion, and of the impiety and folly of paganism, with such triumphant conviction, that the greater part of the pagan bystanders were converted.

Among these were the two brothers SS. Primus and Felician, who received baptism, and openly avowed their belief that the God of the Christians was the only true God. Dacian left no means untried in order to induce them to abandon the faith which they had so recently embraced, and even had them conducted to the temple to sacrifice to the gods; but as their constancy was unconquerable, they were condemned to be beheaded, together with SS. Faith and Caprais, and some other converts.

On the following night the Christians of Agen took the bodies of these blessed martyrs and secretly buried them. After peace had been restored to the Church, a holy bishop of Agen, named Dulcitius, built a church in honor of St. Faith, and placed therein the relics of the above-named martyrs; but in process of time the body of St. Faith was translated to the Abbey of

Conques, which was afterwards called after the saint. She is mentioned in the martyrology on the 6th Octo ber, and is held in great veneration by the Church of France.

CHAPTER LXVII.

ST. GENESIUS, THE COMEDIAN.

August 25.

Authentic documents, quoted by Ruinart, induce us to believe that the martyrdom of Saint Genesius took place at Rome, at the beginning of Diocletian's reign, about, the year 285.

Our saint was a favorite comedian, and such an enemy to the Christians, that he did not exempt from his hale those of his relatives who professed the faith. Having become acquainted with the ceremonies of the Church in the administration of baptism, he wished to amuse the emperor and the Roman people by turning this holy sacrament into ridicule ; and accordingly, acting the part of a dying Christian, the ceremonies of baptism were performed upon him by another player, who personated the character of a priest.

But when the player, sitting down beside him, said, "Well, my child, why hast thou sent for me?" Genesius, suddenly illuminated by divine inspiration, answered, not in jest, but seriously: "I desire to receive the grace of Jesus Christ, and to be relieved from the weight of my sins, which oppress me." The usual ceremonies w'ere then performed, but he seriously answered the questions proposed, and declared that he was in earnest in professing his belief therein. During the recep-

tion of this baptism, he was favored with a vision, in which he saw an angel, surrounded with heavenly light, holding a book in which hissins had been written. The angel having immersed this book in the waters of baptism, showed it to Genesius perfectly white.

In continuation of the play, Genesius was clothed in the white robe of the neophytes, after which certain players representing soldiers came to seize him, and present him to the emperor as a Christian. But when he was brought before Diocletian he manifested the vision with which he had been favored, and proclaimed his desire that all present should acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the true God, through whom alone it is possible to be saved. Diocletian was both surprised and irritated hereat, and having ordered him to be severely beaten with clubs upon the spot, he delivered him over to Plautian, prefect of the praetorium, that he might compel him to renounce Jesus Christ.

Plautian ordered him to be stretched upon the rack, to be torn with iron hooks, and burned with torches; during which horrid infliction the saint made the following protestation: "Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of all things. Him will I adore, although I be obliged to suffer a thousand deaths. All possible tortures shall never take Jesus Christ from my heart or from my lips. My only grief is, that I have so long persecuted his holy name, and have learned to adore him, alas! so late." He was then beheaded, and thus went to receive his reward in heaven.

[1] St. Genesius did not receive the sacrament of regeneration, as the player did not intend to do that which the Church doth, but merely to represent and ridicule her most sacred, rites. Our saint, however, received the baptism of martyrdom.—Ed.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

ST. HIPPOLYTUS, PRIEST.

August 13.

St. Hippolytus was one of the five Roman priests that had the misfortune to be implicated in the schism of Novatian,[1] who, renouncing his obedience to Pope St. Cornelius, had the rashness to have himself surreptitiously consecrated Bishop of Rome. God, however,

[1] The ambition, turbulence, and hypocrisy oi this wretched nun are portrayed at length by Fleury. He had been a stoic philosopher, and had gained some reputation by his eloquence; but being possessed by a devil, he was relieved by a Christian exorcist, and thereupon embraced the faith. He, however, continued a catechumen until he was overtaken by a dangerous illness, when he received baptism in bed. The Church condemned the lukewarmness of those who would so defer their baptism by refusing to admit them to Holy Orders; yet did this hypocrite so ingratiate himself with his bishop as to be ordained priest, notwithstanding that the entire Ixxly of the clergy and many of the laity requested the bishop not to lay hands upon him. Novatian soon proved their distrust of him to be but too well founded ; for the persecution coming on, he shut himself up in his house, and when the deacoas called upon him for the discharge of his priestly functions, he flew in a passion, and exclaimed that he would no longer discharge any clerical duty, as he desired to practise another kind of philosophy. Having thus manifested his cowardice and want of zeal, he next showed his turbulent spirit in opposing and endeavoring to bring discredit upon his Superiors. To this end he tjecame most rigid, and complained that the bishops were too easy in admitting those who had offered sacrifice to a reconciliation with the Church, and that they were thereby guilty of a most criminal relaxation of discipline. He was not only encouraged and abetted in establishing an open schism at Rome by the turbulent and wicked Novatus ; but by his hypocrisy, his cunning, and his desperate calumny of St. Cornelius, he deceived many well meaning and incautious persons, among whom were St. Hippolytus, and some others who had actuary

granted to Hippolytus the grace to expiate this fault by a glorious martyrdom, which he suffered under Decius, in the year 252. He had been already imprisoned with others for the failji, and the .prefect of Rome, who had to pass sentence upon them, was at Ostia, whither he been confessors of thé fâith.' These, however, were quickly disabused, with the exception of Evaristus and Nicostrates, who obstinately persevered in their errors. By the most nefarious means he seduced three bishops to Rome, and obtained from them the episcopal consecration. Thus making himself the first anti-pope, he wrote to the different Churches in the quality of Chief Pastor, which caused much uneasiness to the distant bishops and congregations, as they thought, on the one hand, that an impostor could not be favored by ecclesiastics of eminent sanctity; and on the other, they doubted the truth of his assertions regarding the irregularity of the appointment of Pope Cornelius. But the veil of hypocrisy and cheat under which thé schismatic endeavored to conceal himself was too thin not to be séén through by the intelligent and penetrating Bishop ot Alexandria, St. Dionysius, who having received from him a formal notice of his appointment, sent him the following answer : "You inform me that you were raised to this dignity very much against your inclination ; you will, therefore, be the more willing to resign it. This you should do, rather than allow a schism to continue in the Church ; and for doing so you shall deserve and receive commendation. But should persecution be the consequence of your resignation, know that it will be a more glorious martyrdom than to die for the faith ; because by the latter a person provides only for his o\yn soul, while he who maintains the unity of the Church consults for the salvation of many." This holy bishop and St. Cyprian were of great assistance to the Pope in crushing the schism. The wretched Novatian afterwards added heresy to his other crimes, by teaching that the Church had not the power of forgiving certain sins ; but that apostates, murderers, etc., should be left to the mercy of God, without being reconciled to the Church, no matter what penance they might perform. This doctrine being condemned by the Church, he was followed only by a few, in giving Communion to whom he used to administer a most horrid oath, that they never would abandon him to return to Cornelius. The history of this schism has been given more at length than the dimensions of a note would seem to authorize, not only on account of its importance, but because it is a tolerably fair sample of the motives that influence the authors of heresy and schism, as well as of the means by which they are-propagated.—Eo.

caused all the Christian prisoners to be brought. As Hippolytus was being led out, the people asked him who was the real Pope. He replied : " Fly from the unworthy Novatian; abhor the schism, and adhere to the Catholic Church. I now see things in a different light, and repent of what I once taught."

Upon the arrival of the confessors at Ostia, the prefect caused some of them to be tortured, and finding that this availed nothing, he condemned them all to death. Being informed, however, that our saint was a chief amongst the Christians, he inquired his name; and being told that he was called Hippolytus, the prefect said: "Then let him die the death of Hippolytus, and be dragged by wild horses." By this sentence he referred to the fabled personage who, falling from his chariot, became entangled in the harness, and being dragged along by the horses, was torn to pieces.

The executioners accordingly led out two wild horses, and tying them together, placed a long rope between them, to the end of which they attached the martyr's feet; they then frightened the horses away with shouts and blows; whereupon the saint was heard to say: " O Lord, let my body be torn, but save my soul."

The horses dragged him over rocks and hedges, leaving the entire way sprinkled with his blood, and his torn flesh and limbs scattered about. These the faithful diligently collected, and absorbed his blood in sponges. The relics of this saint, as Prudentius | writes, were afterwards brought to Rome, where they were held in great veneration.

| *Perisltph. hymn.* **4.**

CHAPTER LXIX.

ST. SYMPHORIAN.

August 22.

Faustus, an exemplary Christian of Autun, in France, was the father of St. Symphorian, who by reason of the pious education he received, and being, moreover, assisted by divine grace, made such progress in virtue, that he was held in the highest esteem by all the faithful. There were many idolaters in Autun, who formed an annual procession, in which a statue of the goddess Cybele was borne on a richly adorned chariot. As Symphorianus was, on one occasion, passing the procession, he publicly condemned the veneration of the idol, whereupon he was instantly seized and brought before Heraclius, the governor, who was at the time searching out the Christians, in order to compel them to renounce Jesus Christ.

Heraclius asked our saint why he refused to adore the goddess Cybele, and received the following answer: "I am a Christian; and as such, I adore the true God, who reigns in heaven; but certainly not the images of the devil, which I would rather break to pieces." The governor asked whether he was a native citizen; and being answered by his attendants that he was one of very noble birth, he said to the saint: "I perceive that thy noble birth maketh thee rash and disobedient. But perhaps thou art ignorant of the imperial edicts." He then ordered that edict of Marcus Aurelius, commanding all recusants to be tortured, should be read, and added: "Thou mayest now perceive that thou art guilty of two

crimes—sacrilege towards the gods, and disobedience of the law; upon continuing obstinate thou shalt die." Symphorian answered: "The God whom I adore is as rigorous in awarding punishment as he is bounteous in bestowing rewards; and I never can arrive at the happy eternity unless I persevere in the faith."

Having made this confession, the governor caused him to be scourged with rods and sent to prison; but after some days he sent for the saint, and promised that he would obtain for him a high post of honor if he would adore the gods of the Romans. Symphorian, interrupting him, said: "A judge descends below his dignity when he endeavors to corrupt innocence. I fear nothing; for, sooner or later, I must die; nor do I know of any other honors than those which Jesus Christ promises me, and which are immense and eternal. The honors which are in thy power to bestow are like snow that melts upon the appearance of the sun. Our God alone can grant us a lasting felicity, by making us pan takers of his own glory, which, as it never had a begin, ning, can have no end."

Heraclius, looking sternly at him, said: " My patience is worn out! Instantly sacrifice to Cybele, or I shall have thee put to death after a lengthened torture.' Symphorian answered: "I fear only to offend my God, who is omnipotent. My body is in thy power, but mj soul thou canst not injure." The saint then proceeded to expose the inconsistency of paganism, and spoke sc powerfully that Heraclius commanded him to be be- headed without delay, lest he should make some con- verts.

While he was being led to martyrdom, his pious mother encouraged him in the following words: "Think of God, my child, and fear not a death that leads thee to eternal life. Raise thy eyes to heaven, where the Lord awaits thee in glory. To-day thou diest not. but dost

change this for a better life." Symphorian thus happily terminated his triumph.

The Acts of this glorious martyr are found in Ruinart.

CHAPTER LXX.

SS. BONOSUS AND MAXIMILIAN. OFFICERS.

August 21.

Julian the Apostate, upon his accession to the empire, found an able minister of impiety in the person of another Julian, his maternal uncle, who, to please the wicked emperor, also abandoned the faith. While this impious wretch held the command in the East, two officers of the army, Bonosus and Maximilian, were accused before him, because they retained the cross and the adorable name upon their standards, contrary to the imperial edicts, which ordained that idolatrous figures should be substituted for these Christian emblems. The general having received this information, summoned the Christian officers before him, and told them that they should change their standards, and worship the gods. The saints replied that they would do neither.

Whereupon Julian commanded that Bonosus should

The faithful secretly carried off the body of St. Symphorian, and buried it with great veneration. Towards the end of the fourth century a chapel was built over the tomb, which became celebrated by many miracles. Other churches and monasteries have been since erected in several places in his honor. At the cathedral of Autun there are a few relics that escaped the sacrilegious fury of the Huguenots, who oumt a part of them in 1570. and the saint has always been greatly

be tied up and flogged with scourges loaded with lead. This senterice was most cruelly executed, the number of lashes which he received being upwards of three hundred. During the infliction the general asked the saint many questions, without receiving any answer, until at last he said: "We adore the true God, nor do we know' who these gods are whom we are called upon to worship."

Julian then addressed Maximilian, who returned the same answer that his companion had given, and then added : " If we must adore your gods, make them capable of hearing and speaking, for it is forbidden us to worship deaf and dumb divinities." Hereupon the tyrant caused both the saints to be tortured on the rack; but finding that they suffered with great joy, he ordered ■them to be thrown into a caldron of boiling pitch, from which, however, they came forth unhurt, retaining only some signs of the torments suffered. The idolaters, as usual, attributed this miraculous preservation to the magical abilities of the saints; but the prefect of the praetorium, Secundus Salustius, although a pagan, declared that he wished to examine the matter more minutely. Accordingly, approaching the caldron, instead of hearing any magical incantation, he heard them praising the Lord, as placidly as if they were in a cold bath. Overcome with wonder, he proposed to Julian to expose the priests of their gods to a similar trial, alleging that, if the devil could preserve the Christians, surely the immortal gods would, for their own honor, preserve their priests, as the God of the Christians was said to preserve his servants. Julian dreaded the consequences of refusing to comply with so reasonable a demand, coming from such a person, and accordingly delivered up some pagan priests to the prefect, who ordered them to be cast into the caldron, whereupon they w'ere instantly consumed.

Our saints were then brought back to prison by order *of* the tyrant, who commanded that they should receive no bread but that which bore the impress of an idol,and the saints declared that they would sooner die of hunger than eat it. Meanwhile the brother of Sapor, king of Persia, Prince Hormisdas, who, being a good Christian, had retired from his own country and lived in the Roman empire during the reigns of Constantine and Constantius, paid our saints a visit of devotion, which so enraged Julian that he threatened to expose the saints to wild beasts unless they would abandon their faith. Bonosus answered : "Our God is with us, and therefore we fear neither men nor beasts." Julian next declared that he would have them burned alive ; whereupon the entire crowd of Christians exclaimed that they also should be burned. Julian, fearing a sedition, requested the prefect, Secundus Salustius, to take his place and cause the saints to be again tortured. The prefect, however, refused to comply, and although a pagan, requested Bonosus to pray to his God for him.

Finally, Julian condemned Bonosus and Maximilian, together with some other Christian prisoners, to be beheaded. They all proceeded joyously to martyrdom, accompanied by St. Melesius, Bishop of Antioch, and many other Christians, who congratulated the blessed martyrs on their happy lot.

On the third day after their triumph the wretched Julian was seized with a horrible disorder, which so putrefied his bowels that he constantly vomited forth worms. Having suffered the most excruciating tortures, he at last acknowledged that his punishment was the efiect of divine vengeance, and died in despair.[1]

The Acts of SS. Bonosus and Maximilian are found in Ruinart's collection.

[1] The wife of this wretched man, who was remarkable for her piety, did not fail to make him recognize the hand of God in the exquisite tor-

CHAPTER LXXI.

SS. LIBERATUS, ABBOT; BONIFACE, DEACON; SERVUS, RUSTICUS, SUB-DEACONS; ROGATUS, SEPTIMUS, AND MAXIMUS, RELIGIOUS.

August 17.

Huneric having succeeded Genseric in Africa, raised a persecution against the Catholics, and, at the suggestion of the Arian bishops, published an edict, in the year 485, wherein it was ordained that the Catholic clergy should be banished into far distant countries. Those who had been exiled received no other food than such grain as was given to horses, and even of this they were soon deprived.[1]

During this persecution, seven Religious of a monastery in the province of Byzacena were incarcerated: they were—Liberatus, the abbot; Boniface, deacon; Servus and Rusticus, sub-deacons; Rogatus, Septimus, and Maximus, simple monks. They were at first tempted with promises of riches, honors, and the favor of the sovereign, but answered: "We hold in contempt all that you can promise. As we acknowledge but one God, there can be but one faith. Do unto us as it pleaseth

lures which he suffered during the frightful disease that terminated his wicked life. Moved by the exhortations of this pious lady, and by his own sufferings, he wrote to the emperor to restore the Christian religion; but his prayer was unheeded by the arch-apostate, and he died the victim of God's wrath. It is said that he invoked the mercy of the Lord in his last moments; but we know that "*the death of the wicked is very evil*"—Ps. xxxiii., and we have reason to tremble for the sincerity of tliat sorrow which is elicited by bodily pain.—Ed.

[1] See Chapters XVII. and LXXV.

you; we are willing to suffer all temporal punishments rather than suffer everlastingly." After this protestation they were sent to prison, instructions having been given to the jailers so to maltreat them that they would relent.

The Christians at Carthage, notwithstanding, by bribing the guards, procured admission to them, and administered whatever relief they could afford. Information to this effect having reached Huneric, he gave orders that they should be more closely confined; but, perceiving that their constancy was superior to all sufferings, he ordered that a boat should be filled with dry sticks, and that, the seven Religious being bound thereto, the pile should be fired at sea. While they were being led to the shore they exhorted the faithful to remain steadfast in the faith, and called that day "the day of their salvation."

The soldiers who were guarding them endeavored to seduce Maximus, who was very young, telling him not to imitate his foolish companions, when he might expect a happy life in a king's court; but Maximus replied: "In vain you endeavor to separate me from my brethren. I am anxious to suffer martyrdom with them, and God will grant us grace that we be not divided."

The martyrs were brought into the boat and tied upon the wood; but although the soldiers made several attempts to kindle it, they found it impossible to do so. This miracle, instead of converting the tyrant, enraged him still more, and he commanded the soldiers to beat out the brains of the martyrs with the oars. This brutal order was instantly executed, and the bodies of the saints were thrown into the sea, but the tide cast them ashore, and the clergy and faithful of Carthage gave them honorable burial. The Church celebrates the memory of these martyrs on the 17th August.

CHAPTER LXXII.

ST. SERAPHIA, VIRGIN; AND ST. SABINA, WIDOW.

August 29 and September 3.

St. Seraphia was born at Antioch, of Christian parents, who, to avoid the persecution, retired to Italy, where they died soon after. Many Roman gentlemen, admiring the extraordinary beauty of Seraphia, paid their addresses to her; but she, unwilling to have any other spouse than Jesus Christ, refused these honorable proposals, and preferred becoming a servant to a Roman lady named Sabina who was at that time a young widow. This lady was a pagan, but Seraphia in the space of two months gained her warmest affection, and being full of the Spirit of God, converted her to the faith; whereupon she persuaded her to retire from the tumult of Rome to one of her estates in Umbria. She was accompanied hither not only by Seraphia, but by some other Christian virgins, and her country seat thus became a seminary of saints.

The persecution was renewed in the year 125, and Beryllus, the governor of Umbria, knowing that there were many Christian ladies at the residence of Sabina, ordered that they should be brought before him. Sabina at first refused to obey the order; but Seraphia, whose confidence in Jesus Christ was great, besought of her to let her go alone to the governor, since she hoped that the Lord would grant her strength. Sabina, after much ado, consented, but resolved on accompanying her. Beryllus received Sabina with every mark of respect due to her rank, and expressed his surprise that a lady of her quality would follow the abject sect of the Christians, at

the persuasion of a witch, for so he called Seraphia, whom he knew to have been the cause of her conversion.

The governor on this occasion allowed Sabina to return home with Seraphia; but a few days afterwards he caused the latter to be arrested. Sabina followed her on foot, and used all her endeavors to prevent the maltreatment of her dear friend; but Beryllus, nothing moved by her entreaties, called upon Seraphia to sacrifice to the gods. The holy virgin answered that she was a Christian, that she neither acknowledged nor feared any other than the one true God, and that it was to her a matter of surprise how she could be called upon to worship demons. The governor said: "Let me see thee sacrifice to thy Christ." The saint replied: "Day and night I sacrifice myself to him." Beryllus asked: "And what sort of sacrifice is this? to offer thyself to thy Christ!" Seraphia answered: "The sacrifice of a good life is the most pleasing to him which I can offer."

Beryllus hereupon delivered her up to the pleasure of two infamous young men, but they were deterred by an angel, who struck them almost lifeless to the earth. When the governor asked the saint by what incantation she had produced this effect, she answered that the Christians used no incantations but holy prayer, and confidence in their God who protects them. Beryllus exclaimed in a rage: "Instantly sacrifice to Jove, or be prepared to receive immediate death." Seraphia replied: "This thy threat is tome the greatest possible consolation, since I esteem no happiness so great as that of being enabled to offer my life as a sacrifice to my God." The governor, still more infuriated by this declaration, caused her to be cruelly beaten with clubs; and finding her constancy invincible, finally ordered her head to be struck off.

Sabina, immediately after her death, procured the body of the martyred virgin, and gave it most honorable burial; after which she led a very retired life in her own house, and night and day besought her departed friend to obtain for her also the grace to terminate her course by martyrdom. She was soon consoled; for Beryllus, who had permitted her to return to her house unmolested, out of respect to her rank, was promoted to the prefecture, and was succeeded in the government of Umbria, by Elpidius, who summoned Sabina before him; and having grievously maltreated her, sent her to prison. Upon reaching the prison doors she found herself filled with holy joy, and exclaimed: "And is it then possible that I am to be admitted to a participation of the glory which my Seraphia enjoys? She undoubtedly has obtained for me this great privilege."

On the day following, Elpidius summoned her before him, and said: "How is it possible that thou couldst so far forget thy rank as to follow those abject Christians, who glory in beggary, and madly despise both honors and life itself? One needs must have a mean soul to follow so mean a course." The saint answered: "Thou hast, sir, a false idea of the Christian religion, and art ignorant of its true nobility and real excellence. It is no meanness to despise the goods of this earth in order to attain to those of heaven. It is no disgrace, then, to be a Christian; but it is a real disgrace, meanness, and infamy to kneel down before idols, that have no other merit than that of the materials from which they were formed, or of the workmanship of the hands that made them."

After this answer Elpidius resolved to cease threatening, and in the mildest manner said to her: "The emperors adore these our gods, and thou shouldst also adore them. Do not oblige me to treat thee with rigor." Sabina replied: "My life is in thy power; over my faith

thou hast no control·. I will adore none but the true God." Hereupon Elpidius condemned her to be beheaded. On hearing the sentence the saint exclaimed : "I thank Thee, O my God, for the favor Thou hast done me, and into Thy hands I commend my spirit." After these words the executioner struck off her head. Her martyrdom happened on the 29th of August, the day upon which, in the preceding year, her companion St. Seraphia had received the crown.

The bodies of these twro saints were brought to Rome in the year 430, and placed in a church which was built in honor of St. Sabina, upon the Aventine Mount.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

SS. CYPRIAN, magician; and justina, virgin.

September 29.

Cyprian was born at Antioch | in Syria, of a noble and opulent family, who, being pagans, educated him in the superstitious idolatry, and particularly in the practice of magic, wherein he made such progress by reason of his great talents that he was accounted the most famous magician of Greece. Having become familiar with diabolical practices, there was no sort of abomination too hideous for him to undertake ; and he even went so far as to bleed children to death, in order to offer their blood to demons. This impious life he continued to his thirtieth year, when it pleased the Almighty to make him an illustrious example of his great mercy.

His conversion happened in the following manner:

| A city which, according to Alban Butler, must not be confounded with the ancient capital of Syria; it was situated between Syria and Arabia, and depended on the government of Phenicia.—Ed.

There lived at Antioch a young lady called Justina, who, notwithstanding that her parents were idolaters, had embraced the faith upon hearinga Christian sermon, and had consecrated herself to God by a vow of virginity. Her extraordinary beauty drew the attention of a young gentleman named Agladius, who used all his endeavors to persuade her to become his wife, but being continually repulsed, had recourse to Cyprian, in order that he might change her resolution by some magic spell. The wizard used all his arts in vain; and St. Gregory writes that the devil made use of all his temptations to effect her fall, but that the holy virgin placed herself under the protection of the Mother of purity, and thus remained faithful to her vow. Cyprian upbraided the devil with his impotency in not being able to overcome a young virgin, but he was answered that she was rendered invincible by the God of the Christians. "Since, then," said Cyprian, "thé'God of the Christians is more powerful than thou art, I will rather serve him than thee."

Cyprian forthwith proceeded to a priest, named Eusebius, who had been a friend of his, and from this clergyman he received great comfort and encouragement, particularly against temptation to despair, with which the devil continually afflicted him by upbraiding him with his past enormities. By the charitable assistance of this holy priest, Cyprian, once a monster of fiendish deformity, became a most exemplary Christian, and worked the conversion of many idolaters. It has even been asserted that upon the death of the Bishop of Antioch Cyprian was raised to that see.

In the persecution of Diocletian, Cyprian and Justina were both arrested by Eutolmus, governor of Phenicia, who upon their resolute confession of the faith caused Justina to be scourged and Cyprian to be inhumanly torn with iron hooks. He then sent them into separate dungeons : and every endeavor to pervert them having

proved useless, he caused them to be immersed in a caldron of boiling pitch. The two saints having come forth unhurt, were by the governor sent to the emperor, who ordered them to be beheaded. This sentence was executed on the 26th September. Their relics were brought to Rome, and a pious lady named Rufina afterwards caused a small church to be built over them. They were thence removed into the Lateran Basilica.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

SS. HERMOLAUS, PRIEST; AND PANTALEON, PHYSICIAN.

July 27.

Pantaleon was a native of Nicomedia. His father Eustorgius was a pagan; and his Christian mother Eubula dying while he was yet a child, he was educated an idolater. He studied medicine with such success, that the Emperor Maximilian[1] appointed him his physician. One day as our saint was discoursing with a holy priest named Hermolaus, the latter, after praising the study of medicine, concluded thus: "But, my friend, of what use are all thy acquirements in this art, since thou art ignorant of the science of salvation?" This expression gave rise to a discourse, in which Hermolaus explained the

[1] It was to Galerius Maximianus that our saint was physician. This emperor conceived a great liking for him, on account of his great talents and extraordinary beauty, and placed him under the tuition of the celebrated Euphrosymus. It has been said of St. Pantaleon that he had apostatized upon his reception at court, and that St. Hermolaus merely encouraged him to retract this false step: but the Acts state that he was baptized by his friend, and although he himself says that his mother exhorted him to profess the Christian religion, it does not appear that he ever did so previously to his baptism.—Ed.

principal truths of our faith; so that the physician was obliged to confess that, in order to be truly happy, it is necessary to be a Christian. Some time after it happened that Pantaleon, in one of his walks, found a child lying dead from the recent bite of a viper, and by the impulse of a sudden inspiration said to the child: "In the name of Jesus Christ, arise!" The child instantly arose, and Pantaleon proceeded forthwith in search of St. Hermolaus, from whom he received the sacrament of baptism.[1]

Having once experienced the blessings of the true faith, our saint wished to communicate them to his father, for whose infidelity he grieved much. One day the old man, having asked him the cause of his sorrowful appearance, he answered: "Father, the extravagances of our religion are to me a matter of great concern. If our gods have been men, how did they afterwards become divinities? Again, many idols are formed from the same clay of which pots are made. How, then, can we offer sacrifice to these idols, which are nothing more than blind statues?" The father was greatly moved hereat; and a blind person arriving shortly afterwards to procure some medicine from the saint, he invoked over him the name of Jesus, and his sight was instantly restored. Upon this miracle the blind man and the saint's father were converted, and subsequently baptized.

By these circumstances Pantaleon was discovered to be a Christian, and was accused before the emperor as such. Maximilian sent for him who had been blind, and made inquiry concerning his cure. The man related the fact as it had taken place, and acknowledged that he had thereupon become a Christian. In vain did the emperor endeavor to persuade him that he had been cured not by Jesus Christ, but by the gods. The other answered:

[1] From this circumstance it may be supposed that Hermolaus was a priest; the Acts are silent on this point.—Ed.

" How iè it possible, O prince, that the gods, who are themselves blind, can grant sight to others?" Mortified by this answer, the emperor caused his head to be instantly struck off, and then sent for Pantaleon, whom he upbraided with ingratitude for embracing'the Christian religion after having been by him loaded with honors and riches. The saint answered : "It is not unknown to thy majesty that we are all aware of the origin of those gods, their passions and their crimes ; how then can we adore as gods men who have signalized themselves only by their impiety? O prince! there is but one true God, and he is the God of the Christians. Let us in this presence give a proof of the truth of our faith."

The emperor assented, and a person afflicted with an incurable disease was produced. In vain did the idolaters offer prayers and sacrifice for his relief; but no sooner did Pantaleon make the sign of the cross, and invoke the name of Jesus, than the sick person exclaimed: " I am cured ! I am cured ! There is no other god than the God of the Christians !" The emperor endeavored to satisfy the spectators of this miracle that it was the effect of incantation and magic. Vain attempt ! the greater part were converted, and rendered willing and public testimony to the power of Jesus Christ.

Maximilian, enraged hereat, caused Pantaleon to be led out into one of the public squares, where he was torn with iron hooks, and his wounds burned with torches. He was then thrown into a vessel of liquid lead, from which, however, he came forth perfectly cured. The emperor then commanded him to be cast into the sea, with a millstone tied to his neck ; but the execution of this sentence proved also ineffectual. The saint was next bound to a tree, in order to be cut to pieces by the swords of the executioners ; their weapons, however, fell upon him as though they had been made of wax.

The tyrant, nothing moved by these evident marks of God's protection, ordered his head to be struck off, and there issued therefrom blood, and a white liquor like milk.

St. Hermolaus was the next victim,[1] but his prayers an earthquake shook the entire city, and all the idols were laid prostrate; whereupon Maximilian thought it advisable to despatch him at once, and he was accordingly beheaded.

The relics of St. Pantaleon were translated to Constantinople, and afterwards brought into France. At Ravello, a city in the kingdom of Naples, there is a vial of his blood, which becomes liquid every year, and may be seen in this state interspersed with the milk, as I, the author of this work, have seen it.

CHAPTER LXXV.

ST. FELTX. BISHOP OF ABBIR, AND OTHER HOLY MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS OF THE VANDALIC PERSECUTION.

October 12.

Huneric, king of the Vandals, having resolved to extinguish the Catholic religion in Africa, and to establish there the Arian heresy, by one decree alone banished bishops, priests, and other ecclesiastics,[3] to the number of four thousand nine hundred and seventy-six. Among these was St. Felix, Bishop of Abbir, who being afflicted with paralysis, could neither walk nor speak. Some persons were so moved to compassion for the helpless

[1] St. Hermolaus and his two companions, Hcfmippus and Hermocrates, suffered before St. Pantaleon.—E[D]

[3] See Chapters XVII. and LXXT

state of the venerable prelate, that they besought the king to let him die at Carthage; but he replied: "If Felix cannot sit upon a horse, you may tie him to two oxen, who will drag him to the place of his banishment." He was accordingly fastened upon a mule and so borne away, not without exciting the compassion of all who beheld him.

The other holy confessors who had been condemned to banishment were to be driven into the desert by the Moors and the two officers to whom this barbarous commission had been given thought that they could induce these persecuted ecclesiastics to submit to the wishes of the king. This proposal having been rejected with horror, they were shut up in prison, where, however, they were at first treated with comparative lenity, as the Catholics were permitted to visit them, and to bring them some nourishment.

This indulgence was afterwards not only denied, but the confessors were crowded into dark and narrow dungeons, so that the filth and noisomeness of the place was absolutely intolerable. St. Victor Vitensis, by bribing the Moors, obtained a few interviews with the sufferers, whom he endeavored thus to console; and he assures us that upon entering he had to stand up to his knees in filth. Notwithstanding all the hardships which these true lovers of Jesus Christ had to endure, and although many of them had died from this cause, and many of hunger, yet did the constancy' of the survivors remain unshaken.

The time appointed for their departure having arrived, they were led out, from what might be more properly called sewers than dungeons, to be driven forward by the Moors; and although their clothes and faces were besmeared with filth, they nevertheless man-

[1] Our author means the aboriginal inhabitants, now called "Berbers."—Ed.

ifested a holy joy, while they chanted from the 149th Psalm : "This glory is unto all his saints." The roads through which they passed were lined with Catholics, who had repaired thither, many of them bearing lighted tapers, as if to honor their triumph, and others bring-
ing their children to kiss the ground that had been trodden by the martyrs. Among the pious sufferers were many children who had been employed in the service of the churches ; and these were followed by their mothers, some of whom rejoiced at being thus made the parents of martyrs, while others, influenced by carnal affection, in vain endeavored to prevail on the children to consent to Arianism. Among the former was an aged matron, who carried a bag with some bread in one hand, and was leading a boy by the other, while she said to him : " Hasten, my child, hasten. Dost thou not see how joyously the martyrs hurry towards the crown ?" Being asked why she said so, she answered : " Pray for me, I beseech ye, pray for me, and for this my little grandson. I come with this child into exile, in order that the enemy find him not alone, and so precipitate him into hell."

Meanwhile the barbarians hurried the holy confessors towards the desert ; and, as the old men and children were unable to keep pace with the rest, they were goaded on with spears and pelted with stones. But the more they were harassed, the less able they were to accomplish their task ; so that this gave occasion to another diabolical cruelty, for they were tied by the feet and dragged over stones and briers. Many expired in this way ; and indeed they were only the most robust that arrived, worn and lacerated, at the place of their exile.

This was a desert, filled with serpents and most venomous scorpions, but they did no harm to any of the

servants of God. They were for some time supported here with barley, like beasts, but even of this food they were afterwards deprived. Yet St. Victor, who wrote a history of this persecution, and was himself one of the persecuted bishops, observes that the Lord did not fail to succor his servants when they were deprived of every human aid.

PART IL

r: / fttartnrs of Japan.

NOTICE.[1]

I will add here the victories of those martyrs who in the inlands of Japan suffered death in order to profess their faith in Jesus Christ. In giving their history I have selected the most heroic and the most wonderful traits by which they signalized their zeal for the Christian religion. I trust that my readers will be very well pleased to see in the midst of a barbarous nation so

[1] This notice is wanting in several Italian editions; we find it in the Turin edition of 1831. St. Alphonsus seems to have based his narrative on the work of Father Crasset, "History of the Church in Japan," published at first under the pseudonym of "M. l'Abbé T."

The empire of Japan, situated northwest of China, is composed of a great number of islands, the area of which is about the same as that of California, which lies due east, and its population is nearly equal to that of the United States. Its capital is Tokio, formerly called Jedo. Although within the last half-century the Japanese have been compelled to change their foreign policy, and have even sent several embassies to Europe, still, as late as 1S70, 4000 Christians from one valley alone were exiled for their faith.

It was on the 15th of August, Î549, that St. Francis Xavier landed in Japan to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Forty years afterwards there were seen a great number of servants of the true God in every condition of life, some of them even near the throne; the Christian religion was dominant in several kingdoms, so that towards the beginning of the 17th century, according to trustworthy writers, the church in Japan numbered two million Catholics.—Eb.

many Christians,—men, women, children, old people—after they had embraced the faith, seeking with eagerness the opportunity to die for Jesus Christ, and manifesting their joy at being able to suffer for him the most cruel torments.

In obedience to the decree of Urban VIII. I protest that in giving the appellation of *Saint* or *Martyr* to any servant of God, I only intend to do so according to the usage and opinion of men, since it is reserved to the Church to decree by divine authority these titles, when it shall please the Lord.

CHAPTER I.

MIRACULOUS CROSS FOUND NEAR ARIMA----PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF BUNGO----JORAM MACAMA—COURAGE OF THE CHRISTIANS.

1586-1589.

Our European priests who undertook to evangelize Japan were at first very successful; but in the year 1586 God made known by several signs the approach of a long and bloody persecution that was menacing the rising church. Among these signs the following is particularly remarkable:

The King of Arima, named Protasius[1], a good and zealous Christian, had a vision in which there appeared to him two persons of celestial exterior, who thus spoke to him: "Know that on the lands over which you rule the sign of Jesus is found; honor and love it much, for

[1] Protasius was his baptismal name, and he took the name of John when he received confirmation. We may read about his heroic death in Chapter VII.—Ed.

it is not the work of man." Six months afterwards, it happened that a fervent Christian, by the name of Leo, from the neighborhood of Arima, sent his son Michael to the woods for the purpose of cutting firewood. On his arrival the young man perceived a tree that was somewhat dried up, of the kind called in that country Tara; he cut it down, split it in two, and found inserted in the middle of it a cross of a brown color and of a regular form. At the sight of this prodigy every one was struck with astonishment. As soon as the king heard of this, he went himself to the place, and on seeing the crass he cried out : " Behold the sign of Jesus, that I was told was hidden in my dominions, and that was not made by the hand of man." He then fell on his knees, and after having venerated it amidst many tears, he had it carried to Arima, where by his order it was framed in a magnificent crystal. This miraculous cross brought about the conversion of twenty thousand idolatrous inhabitants of this country.

But let us return to the martyrs. The persecution begun by the emperor in 1587 became about three years afterwards very sanguinary in the Christian kingdom of Bungo ; and the first victory that I find described in Japan is that of a good old man of Funai, named Joram Macama. He was a soldier when he embraced Christianity, and afterwards converted his whole family ; he subsequently spent his time in instructing the pagansand aiding the faithful. The King of Bungo having apostatized, commanded three of his officers to put him to death. They went in search of him ; but fearing the valor of which Joram had given proofs in war, they took with them by way of precaution an escort of one hundred men. Anticipating their arrival, Joram took leave of his wife and children, sent them to another place and remained alone in the house, preparing himself for death. He did not even wish to keep his sword

near him, and the night in which he was to die he spent in prayer before the crucifix.

Towards midnight the soldiers approached the house to see whether he was armed. The saintly old man, perceiving them, told them that they had nothing to fear, because, far from fleeing from them, he was waiting for them. He then took a cross in his hand, placed a rosary around his neck, and having knelt down gave thanks to God for allowing him to die for his name, and even thanked the soldiers, because by the death-blow they were going to give him they would procure for him eternal happiness. Then having received three stabs in his breast, he presented his neck, and while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary three blows of the cimeter deprived him of life. The faithful hastened to take away his body and to bury it. This so enraged the king that he put to death the wife and children of the valiant martyr, as also many other Christians.

The tyrant by these first acts of cruelty inspired the Christians with great fear; when, however, they heard of the noble death of Joram and of other Christians, especially of that of another Christian named Joachim, who had also been put to death by the king, instead of being intimidated they appeared publicly with the rosary around the neck, testifying thereby that far from fearing death they had a longing for it. A woman named Mary, to whom the king before his apostasy had made a present of a rosary, had the courage to wear it in the palace before his very eyes. The prince having asked the reason why she did so, she answered: "Sire, the presents of kings must be highly esteemed; it was your Majesty who gave me this rosary, and I glory in wearing it." The tyrant seeing the Christians so resolute, and fearing that a tumult might arise, was content for the present to conceal the hatred that he bore them, in order to revenge himself at a more favorable time.

CHAPTER II.

PERSECUTION BY THE EMPEROR TAICOSAMA—GREAT ZEAL OF THE CHRISTIANS—TWENTY-SIX MARTYRS CRUCIFIED AT NANGASAKI.

1596-1597.

Taicosama having in 1582 ascended the imperial throne, was at first favorable to the missionaries; blit four or five years afterwards, beginning to distrust and to hate them exceedingly, he published an edict which proscribed the Christian religion in his whole empire. He did not, however, push to extremes; for during several years he contented himself with forbidding all religious manifestations, and the faith continued to be propagated unnoticed.

On December 9, 1596, feeling again incensed against the servants of the true God, the emperor ordered the governor of Meaco, as also the governor of Ozaca, where the religious of St. Francis were established, to arrest these Fathers and to draw up a list of the Christians who frequented their churches. Here follows what Father Peter Baptist, the Superior of the Franciscans, wrote at that time to a religious of his Order: •'The first day on which guards were placed before our door the Christians confessed and passed the whole night in prayer; for we had been informed that we were to be put to death on the following day. I gave Holy Communion to all our brethren, as if for the last time. Then each one provided himself with a cross tc carry in the hand while going to the place of execution. Our Christians filled me with consolation bv the ardent desire which they displayed to die for Jesus Christ.

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When the news spread that the latter had been condemned to death, many others came from different places to join them. 'We must once die,' they said. 'We all desire that this may be for the glory of God, and we pray him to give us the grace to do so; help us to obtain this from the divine Goodness.' "

During this time were witnessed a large number of wonderful examples, some of which we will now quote.

Prince Ucondono, a distinguished general, to whom Taicosama was indebted for his empire, was living for six years in exile, because he had refused to abjure his faith. He had been stripped of his dignities, deprived of his estates, his old father, his wife, and his large family sharing in the same privations; yet they esteemed themselves happy in being able to suffer for Jesus Christ. When he heard of the persecution, he took leave of the king of Canga, under whose supervision he had been placed and whose friendship he enjoyed on account of his great virtue. The latter assured him that the court was not thinking of him; but the noble Ucondono answered: "My dear prince, the greatest happiness in which I can delight in this world is to die for the faith that I profess. Whatever maybe the assurance that you give me, I am going to prepare myself for death." He immediately set out for Meaco.

The fervor of the two sons of Genifonio, who was a pagan and prime-minister of the emperor, and who was ignorant of the fact that his sons had received baptism, was not less great than that of Prince Justus Ucondono.

The elder son, aged twenty years, was named Paul Sacondono. He enjoyed the favor of the emperor, and was commander of a fortress that was far away from the capital. Having heard that all the Fathers, as well as the bishops, had been arrested, and that all the Christians were to be put to death, he at once dispatched two couriers, one to Meaco and the other to Ozaca, in

order to assure himself of the truth. While waiting he began to reflect on the best means to attain martyrdom. He at first thought of showing himself publicly at the capital, so as to be arrested ; but fearing that no one would dare to lay his hand upon him if he were seen clad in his ordinary costume, he had his hair cut off and disguised himself as an ecclesiastic, being resolved to appear there with eight of his faithful Christian servants. Only one among them showed any sign of inconstancy, because he had been but recently baptized. Sacondono advised him not to expose himself with the others; but he generously answered : "My lord, I well know what the eternal salvation of my soul is worth ; since martyrdom is the shortest road to gain it, I prefer it, and I make no more account of my life than I do of the dust under my feet." Satisfied with this answer the young lord went to his room, where, prostrate on the floor, he prayed fervently to God to make him worthy to die for the love of him. Then he wrote to his parents to inform them that he was a Christian, and that he had formed the resolution to die for his faith In this disposition he made a general confession, and prepared himself for death.

His brother's name was Constantine. He arrived at Meaco with one of his cousins named Michael, where he received the fatal news. He cried out : " Oh we have just come in time to be martyrs." He immediately went to Fucino, where his father was, and declared to him that he was a Christian. The minister, who tenderly loved his son, was astonished ; he took him aside and said to him : "But, my son, if the emperor commands me to put to death all Christians, it will be necessary for me to make you die with them." Constantine answered : "Mv father, I have declared to you that I am a Christian, not that I may avoid death, but that vou mav regulate your affairs. As for me, I am ready to

die by the hand of the executioner, and even by your own hand, rather than disobey God; you certainly do not wish, I think, that I should cast myself into hell merely to please a prince." Genifonio communicated this source of affliction to his wife, and both were plunged into the deepest grief. Michael happening to call upon his sorrowing aunt, she entreated him to use every effort to dissuade Constantine from rushing headlong to so premature a death. Nevertheless both returned to Meaco in order to find there an opportunity to be inscribed on the list of martyrs.

About this time two other gentlemen came to Meaco to sacrifice their lives for the faith; and not having been able to obtain what they desired, they begged their friends to notify them when the favorable moment should arrive.

We must also make mention of a gentleman of Bungo, named Andrew Ongazavara, who after the martyrdom of the saintly Joram, of whom we have spoken in the previous chapter, carried off at night the cross that the latter wore around his neck. Since that time he lived retired at Ozaca with his old father, his wife, and his young child. When this brave man learned that a list was being made up of Christians who were doomed to die, he not only courageously prepared himself for death, but he also advised his own father to prepare for death, although he was eighty years of age, and had been baptized only six months before. He had been all his life a redoubtable warrior, and was still vigorous. Andrew exhorted him to gain the palm of martyrdom by informing him that it was gained not by the force of arms, but by humility and patience. "But," cried out the old soldier indignantly, "may a man of honor allow, himself to be killed like a coward?" Andrew, knowing that all this pride came from his little knowledge of Christian maxims, said to him: "My dear father, you.

have given too many proofs of your valor; for no one will think of reproaching you with cowardice, if you give your life for Jesus Christ without defending it. If, however, this manner of acting does not please you, retire at least for a short time into the country; you will there preserve your life and honor." Becoming yet more indignant, the old man replied that he had always been incapable of such baseness, which would be worse than the first offer that had been made him. for to do such a thing would look as if he were fleeing to save his life. Andrew, however, saw that his object was attained in another way ; for the good old man. filled with emotion, entered the apartments of his daughter-in-law, whom he found occupied in working at her festive garments ; he also perceived the servants preparing their rosaries, crosses, and reliquaries for the day of their martyrdom. He asked what all this signified, and they informed him with a joyful air that all were preparing themselves to die for Jesus Christ. These few words and their example made such an impression on his mind, that, renouncing the maxims of the world, he also took a rosary, and said that he wished to die with them.

We may also see at this time the generosity of several Christian women of Meaco. Having learned that the persecution had been proclaimed, they assembled at the house of one of them, named Mary, in order to be always prepared for martyrdom ; and each one had taken care to take with her her nuptial garment, that is, the garment in which she wished to die. There was a person of very high rank, who, fearing that she would on this account escape being prosecuted by the law, went secretly to Mary's house, in order to die with the rest. Mary had living with her an adopted child, named Gratia, ten years of age ; she endeavored to persuade her to return to her father's house in order to avert the

danger of being crucified; but the child answered with firmness: "No; I wish to die with you, because I am a Christian. Have no fear for me; as long as I shall be with you I shall not fear death." Mary was greatly consoled to hear such language from the mouth of her dear child, which was an effect of divine grace. Being quite ready, one of the women said to her companions: "I am resolved to die for the faith; but if you ever see me tremble at the sight of death, I beg you to drag me forcibly before the executioners, in order that I may not fail in having a share in your crown."

Such were the dispositions of these fervent neophytes at the moment when it was believed that all the faithful were going to be nailed to the cross; but as to the majority of them, Heaven was satisfied with their good-will. The governor of Meaco, though a pagan, tried his utmost to mitigate the sanguinary order that the emperor had given him, and he finally succeeded in having the number reduced to twenty-four. The emperor had commanded that their noses and ears should be cut off; but the governor had only the end of the left ear cut off. This was done January 3, 1597, in the grand square of Meaco. The twenty-four condemned persons were then placed upon eight carts, and were ignominiously conducted through the streets, being preceded by an officer who carried at the end of a pike a sign on which could be read the sentences pronounced against them, because they had preached Christian doctrine that was proscribed in the empire. The entire population was moved to tears on seeing the modesty, sweetness, and even joy of these pretended criminals, so that their humiliation was changed into a triumph. Many Christians went so far as to beg the soldiers to put them among the number of the condemned, that they might die with them; but the favor was refused. When the martyrs had returned to the prison they rap-

turously embraced one another, rejoicing at the happy death that awaited them. This filled the guards with astonishment, and made them say : " What kind of men are these who rejoice amidst torments and every sort of insult ?"

On the following day, January 4, they were placed upon beasts of burden, to be transported to Nangasaki, the place of execution, where they arrived after a journey lasting a month. While passing through Ozaca and Sacaia, they were exposed as at Meaco to the gaze of the people ; but the effect produced was quite contrary to what their enemies expected. In this long journey the severity of the season added not a little to the sufferings of these holy martyrs , yet a large number of the faithful accompanied them, bestowing upon them everywhere marks of sympathy and veneration. Peter Sukegiro and Francis Fahelente, two fervent Christians, had not ceased for an instant to follow them, and with an invincible courage to assist them in their wants. Their faith and their charity were handsomely rewarded ; for the guards, seeing that nothing could repel them, concluded to make them prisoners and to add their names to the list of the condemned. Thus was the number of martyrs increased to twenty-six.

They arrived at Nangasaki on February 4. On the following day they were conducted to a hill situated near the city, where the instruments of death had been prepared. When they saw the crosses that were destined for them on their Calvary, these courageous athletes gave themselves up to transports of joy, and each one hastened to place himself at his post. Their limbs and the middle of the body were then tied to their crosses with cords, according to the custom of the country ; a collar of iron was put round their necks ; afterwards the crosses were raised simultaneously and fixed in the ground, all being in one row, with their

faces turned to the south, in the direction of the city. Father Peter Baptist intoned the canticle *Benedictus,* and his companions joined their voices to his. Soon after, each one was pierced with two lances which, thrust into the sides, crossed each other in the breast and came out at the shoulders. At this moment a large number of the faithful who had surrounded the hill, uttering cries and saying, "Jesus, Mary," made their way through the line of the soldiers, entering the enclosure, to gather up the blood of the martyrs with cloths and procure for themselves a part of their garments. We are told that a heavenly light was shining above their bodies, and that for a long time many stars appeared over the hill.

[1] These twenty-six martyrs, beatified in 1627 by Pope Urban VIII., were canonized by Pius IX., June 8, 1862, on the feast of Pentecost, in the presence of about three hundred bishops who had come from all parts of the world. Their feast is fixed for the 5th of February, the day on which they consummated their sacrifice. The following are their names and their rank:

Six Franciscan Religious; namely, the three priests, Fathers Peter Baptist, aged fifty-two; Martin de Aguirre, or of the Ascension, aged thirty; and Francis Blanco, aged thirty—all Spaniards; one cleric, Philip of Jesus or Las Casas, aged twenty-three, born in Mexico; two lay-brothers, Francis of St. Michael, aged fifty-four, a Spaniard, and Gonzalvo Garcia, aged twenty-five, born in the Indies of Portuguese parents.

Seventeen Japanese who, before going to execution, were received into the Third Order of St. Francis; namely, Michael Cozaki and his son Thomas, aged fourteen; Anthony, aged thirteen; Paul Ibarki and his younger brother, Leo Garazuma, with their nepiiew Louis, a boy of eleven; Paul Suzuki; Francis, a physician of Meaco, aged forty-six; Come Toja or Takia; Thomas Danki; Bonaventure or Ventura; Gabriel, aged nineteen; John Kisnia or Kimoia; Joachim Saquir or Saccakibara, aged forty; Matthias, a substitute for another of the same name; Francis Fahelentc, Peter Sukegtro,

Three Japanese Jesuits, namely, Father Paul Miki, aged thirty-three, with two novices, John de Goto, aged nineteen, and James Kisai, aged sixty-four, who made their vows on the very day of their martyr-

We might relate many interesting particulars about each one of these glorious soldiers of Jesus Christ, but we must be brief. We cannot, however, pass over in silence what concerns the three youngest of them; namely, Thomas, of about fourteen years of age; Anthony, aged thirteen; and Louis, who was eleven years old. They used to serve at the altar at the church of the Franciscans, and might have gone away when the list of the condemned was published, but they deemed nothing so much as the palm of martyrdom. They were together on the same cart when, with the end of the ear cut off, they were conducted through the streets of Meaco. With their hands tied behind them, these three young confessors began to sing, with a radiant countenance and with a penetrating voice, the *Paler noster* and the *Ave Maria.* This spectacle moved all hearts.

Thomas was the son of Michael Cozaki, one of the twenty-six martyrs. His father had written to him that, being resolved to die, he left him heir of all his property; but the saintly young man came at once to see him, and represented to him that it was not just to make him the heir of earthly goods by excluding him from those that he was going to possess in heaven, and he declared that he was determined to die with him. Thomas had also the happiness of going to heaven with his father, his head encircled with the same crown.

Anthony, born at Nangasaki, met his father and his mother, who subjected him to a violent temptation. They were Christians, and when they saw their dear child on the point of being crucified, they permitted themselves to be overcome by natural affection, and

dom. The Jesuits had not then been included in the sentence of condemnation; but the governor of Ozaka had these three arrested as they were in the city, and joined them to the Franciscans, against whom this persecution was chiefly directed.—Ed.

began to conjure him with tears to dissimulate for a little while. "You wish then," said the young hero, "that in order to preserve this life that lasts only a moment, I should lose life eternal? Ah! cease to tempt me by your discourses and your complaints. I am resolved to die for Jesus Christ." Having spoken thus, he left his parents, refused with the same firmness the offers of a magistrate whom this scene had deeply moved, and gave himself up to the executioners. When he was raised upon the cross he found himself by the side of Father Peter Baptist; and after the hymn *Benedictus* he begged him to intone the psalm *Laudate Pueri Dominum.* But the holy religious, who was absorbed in an ecstasy, not answering him, he intoned it himself, and continued it as far as the *Gloria Patri,* which he was going to chant forever in paradise, having had at this moment his heart pierced with the lance.

Little Louis, who had been baptized only a few days before, showed no less courage. The officers of the law had at first refused to put his name on the list; but by dint of crying and begging he succeeded in having his name inscribed. His face, which was radiant with joy, attracted in the streets of Meaco the attention of all, and deeply moved the spectators. The under-governor of Nangasaki, who was charged with presiding at the execution, wished to set him free, provided he would renounce the Christian religion. "On such a condition," Louis replied, "I do not desire to live; since for this short and miserable life I should lose a happy and eternal life." It is said that as soon as he saw his cross he ran to embrace it, as if he had found an object that was most dear to him. He died with an angelic air, by the side of Anthony. Further on we shall see other wonderful victories gained by children.

CHAPTER III.

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF FINGO—JOHN MINAMI, MAGDALEN HIS WIFE, AND LOUIS THEIR ADOPTED SON, WITH SIMON TAQUENDA, JANE HIS MOTHER, AND AGNE6 HIS WIFE.

1603.

In the year 1598, at the age of sixty-four, the emperor Taicosama died, well deserving the fires of hell, since he had shed so much blood of the faithful servants of Jesus Christ. He had given orders that after his death he should be ranked among the gods. As his successor he left a son scarcely six years old, under the tutelage of six regents of the empire. At the head of this regency was Daifusama, who profited by his position gradually to usurp the imperial power, and, as we shall see, surpassed his predecessor in cruelty

Daifusama at first believed it to be the best policy to treat the Christians like the rest of his subjects until he could see his authority well established. During the first years of his reign there were only local persecutions that were carried on by secondary tyrants. In 1603, the king of Fingo, named Canzugedono, wishing to compel the nobility of Jateudixiro to deny the Christian faith, the magistrates of this city forcibly dragged into the house of a bonze, a gentleman named John Minami, in order to place upon his head the book of his sect; for this was a sign of apostasy. Magdalen, the wife of the

[1] Nevertheless the Christian religion, during the regency, which lasted four years, and before Daifusama became the sole ruler, had spread rapidly, for the Jesuits converted in two years seventy thousand Japanese.—Ed.

persecuted gentleman, a fervent Christian, followed her husband, crying out: "Take care, my dear John, what you do; if you become faithless to your religion, I will neither speak to you nor see you, any more, and I will renounce you as my husband." When the bonze, who was seated on a kind of throne, raised the volume to place it on John's head, the servant of God, not being able to do anything else, spit upon the infamous book. One of his friends by the name of Simon Taqueiyia offered a similar resistance, and refused to go to the house of the bonze. The king being informed of what had happened, ordered the governor to have them beheaded, and to have all the members of their families crucified.

As soon as Minami heard of the fate that was awaiting him, he presented himself to the governor. The latter made every effort to gain him over, but could not shake his constancy; he then showed him the order of the the king, and saintly man declared that he desired nothing so much as to sacrifice his life for the God whom he adored. Thereupon he was led into a large hall, where he had to leave his sword; passing then still farther, he was taken in charge by three soldiers, and there appeared upon the scene two executioners armed with cutlasses John knelt down, presented his neck, and pronounced the holy names of Jesus and Mary; he received four blows that cut off his head, December 8, in the thirty-first year of his age.

On the same day the governor went to the house of Simon Taquenda, who was his intimate friend, to persuade him to show some sign of submission to the will of the king. As soon as the governor saw him he burst into tears ; Simon, greatly moved, could not restrain his .own, and they thus remained for some time without speaking. The governor tried in vain to shake his friend, when Jane, the mother of Simon, entering, he said to

her: "Your son refuses to follow my counsel, preserve him and his whole family from death, and do not force me to imbrue my hands in his blood." But his noble mother replied to him with firmness: "If there were questions only of terrestrial goods, your counsel would be good; but, when eternal goods are in question, we must not prefer a transitory life to a felicity that has no end. I envy the happiness of my son, and if I could I would follow him with joy."

This language stung the governor to the quick, and took away from him all hope of overcoming the constancy of his friend. He thereupon withdrew and communicated to an officer, a relative of Simon, that this gentleman had been condemned to death, and that he charged him on the part of the king with the duty to go and behead him in his house. This officer went to the house of his relative, rapped at the door, for it was already night, found the servant of God in prayer, and made known to him the contents of the written order of which he was the bearer. "You could not have brought me," said Simon to him, "more pleasant news; only allow me a few moments to prepare myself for death." This delay was granted him.

The pious gentleman went at once to prostrate himself before an image of our Lord crowned with thorns. After his prayer he visited his mother and his wife, and apprised them of his approaching death. These women, without being disturbed, ordered the domestics to prepare some water, according to the custom the Japanese had of washing themselves when they were invited to a banquet. Simon, having finished his ablutions, put on his richest garments and took leave of his mother and of his wife, not forgetting his servants. When the latter began to cry and utter lamentations, he said to them: "What! do you not rejoice at my happiness? where is your faith? where is the Christian virtue of

which you have shown proofs up to the present time?" Then his wife, whose name was Agnes, throwing herself at his feet, begged him to cut off her hair. "In this way," she said, "if I survive you, people may not think that I ever wish to have another husband." Simon at first refused the request, but finally yielded at the entreaties of his mother.

He afterwards arranged that three members of the confraternity[1] of Mary should meet him, and to them he spoke thus: "My dear confrères, what a happiness is mine to be able to die as a martyr of Jesus Christ! What have I done to merit this grace?" "Yes," replied one of them, named Joachim, "you are happy. Pray to God, when you are in heaven, to make us share in your glory." All knelt down; Simon recited the *Confiteor*, and the *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* three times; then he remained silent for some time, conversing interiorly with his God. His prayer finished, he arose, had the crucifix brought in and the candle lit, took his mother by one hand and his wife by the other, and spoke to them the following words: "I bid you a final farewell; I shall no longer see you in this world, but I count upon seeing you soon in heaven. I go before you to pave the way for you; I shall pray God to permit you to participate in this happiness, and to call you soon to paradise." After this they proceeded to the hall where the sacrifice was to be consummated. One of the associates carried the crucifix, the two others accompanied him with burning candles, and the martyr followed them, holding by the hand his mother and his wife. Then followed the domestics, plunged in the deepest sorrow.

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Having reached the hall, the martyr fell upon his knees before the image of the Saviour; his mother

[1] These were noblemen who devoted themselves to the exercise of charity, and who were known by the name of Gifiaqui; we shall see their glorious end, as related in Chapter V.—Ed.

and his wife withdrew a little aside, then all made the sign of the Cross and recited the *Confiteor,* and three times the *Our Father* and *Hail Mary.* At this moment a gentleman, a friend of Simon, entered to bid him farewell; his name was Figida, and he had unfortunately denied his faith. Filled with remorse on witnessing this spectacle, although he did not dare to confess his repentance at that time, he asked his friend as a favor for a bead of a blessed rosary. Simon gave it to him on condition that he would return to Jesus Christ; this the gentleman promised to do. Finally, the martyr having recommended himself to God for the last time, pulled down the collar of his garment, saluted the image of the Saviour by bowing down with his forehead to the ground, and, pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, offered his head to the executioner, who cut it off with one blow. One of the associates took it up at once, and placed it upon his own as a mark of veneration. All those that were present uttered a cry at the moment the fatal blow was struck; but the mother and the wife of the martyr appeared to be unmoved, and were silent Some time afterwards, the mother took the head of her son, kissed it several times, and said: "O beautiful head, now crowned with glory! O happy Simon, you have given your life to Him who gave his own for you!—My God, who didst sacrifice Thy Son for the love of me, receive my son, who sacrificed himself for Thee." Agnes also approached, kissed the head of her dear husband while moistening it with her tears, and said: "As for myself. I am satisfied; I have a martyr husband who is now in heaven. O Simon! call me as soon as possible to you, to see and praise with you the Lord our God."

Simon Taquenda died, like John Minami, at the age of thirty-five, December 9, two hours before daybreak. The soldiers who guarded his body testified to having seen,

during that same night, a great light descending from heaven and resting above the house of the martyr.

When the two women, Jane and Agnes, had withdrawn, Figida, the converted gentleman, came to visit them; and finding them in tears, said to them: "How is it that you, who showed so much constancy while seeing your dear Simon die, now when he is no more you give yourselves upto lamentations?" They answered that what made them weep was because they were still in this life, and because they feared that they would not be thought worthy of martyrdom. Figida, in order to console them, informed them that Magdalen, the widow of Minami, had already been condemned to death, and added that they should not expect to receive better treatment. On hearing this news both fell on their knees to thank God, and their sorrow disappeared. They now had the courage to ask the governor to let them die with the virtuous Magdalen, and this request was granted them.

In fact, towards evening Magdalen was led into the house with a child of about seven years of age, named Louis, who was a nephew of Minami, and whom she had adopted as her son. When they found themselves together, they tenderly embraced each other, happy to die like Jesus Christ on the Cross, according to the order given by the emperor. Then Magdalen, turning towards little Louis, who had been condemned to die with her, told him to prepare himself to depart for heaven, and recommended to him above all not to cease, when he would be on the cross, to repeat till his death the words: "Jesus and Mary." The child answered: "My dear mother, I will not forget to do so as long as I am alive."

At night they were informed that they would have to start for the place of execution. They appeared attired in their finest garments, recommended themselves to God, and set out on the journey. Three palanquins, each carried by two men, were awaiting them at the

door. Little Louis was placed with his mother. When they approached the place where the crosses had been prepared, Agnes said: "Jesus, my Saviour, went on foot to Mount Calvary, and should I be carried thither in a litter!" She wished to descend from the palanquin, but she was prevented from doing so, as she was told that the officers would not permit such a thing. Having finally reached their crosses they knelt down to venerate them.

The first that was crucified was the heroic Jane, the mother of Simon. She spoke thus from the height of the cross to the crowd that had surrounded her: "About to appear before God to render to him an account of all my actions, I confess that the Christian religion is the only one in which you can save your soul; open your eyes, and renounce the false divinities. And you, O Christians, do not allow yourselves to be unsettled by the spectacle of our death; there is nothing sweeter than to die for him who died for us." The executioner interrupted her at these words by striking her with the lance. The first blow was not mortal, but the second deprived her of life, and thus enabled her to receive the heavenly crown.

It was then Magdalen's turn. Little Louis, seeing his mother bound, offered himself to be also bound to the cross. The executioners raised him on the small cross prepared for him opposite to his mother, who then said to him: "My son, we are going to heaven; take courage, and always say: Jesus! Mary!" While the child was repeating these sacred names, the executioner struck at him with his lance, but missed him; and the little lamb received tranquilly the second blow, which caused his death. Immediately afterwards, the same executioner withdrawing the iron, quite red with the blood of the child, plunged it into the heart of the mother, and thus united the two victims.

There remained yet the innocent Agnes, who having descended from the palanquin, remained kneeling before her cross, and recommended herself to God. The executioners, moved to tears, had not the heart to approach and to tie her to the cross, although she begged them to discharge their duty, and while waiting for them placed herself on that cruel instrument. Then some idolaters, urged on by the inducement of receiving a reward, took courage to take the place of the executioners, but when it became necessary to pierce the victims, not having had any experience, they succeeded in taking away her life only by repeated blows.

Many persons worthy of belief attested having seen a resplendent light over the bodies of the four martyrs at the moment in which the}'· gave up their souls to God. Their history was written by Louis Cerqueyra, Bishop of Japan.

After their death the governor was more enraged than before against the Christians; but God permitted that he should fall into disgrace with the king, who deprived him of his office, and ordered him to appear to render an account of his actions. It is thus that the Lord punishes those who, to please princes, sully their souls; they lose at the same time their souls and the favor of their master.

CHAPTER IV.

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF SAXUMA AND D'AMANGUCHI—JAMES SACOIAMA MELCHIOR BUGENDONO—DAMIAN, THE BLIND MAN----LEON XIQUEMON.

1604-1608.

During the persecution of which we have just spoken, a youth, who was a Christian, named James Sacoiama,

and only fourteen years old, had gone with his mother to live in the kingdom of Saxuma. As he was of fine appearance and possessed much intelligence, the king grew very fond of him, and even thought of giving him as wife a princess of his family. One day the king communicated to him what he intended to do; but only on condition that the young man would renounce the Christian religion. The young man, who already held a situation at court, answered that he would not abjure his faith for the whole world. The king tried another method in order to seduce him: he sent to his mother four of his trusty servants, in the hope that she would influence her son to yield to the wishes of his prince. This virtuous woman courageously declared that she could not in conscience lend herself to carry out such a design. The king became so enraged at this that all were expecting a terrible revenge. The mother and the son thereupon retired the following night to the oratory, which they had in their own house, in the expectation of death. But the king fearing that his violence might displease the emperor, who at that time (1604) was yet favorable to the Christians, restrained himself for the present. It is not known what subsequently became of them.

It was about this time that the crown of martyrdom was obtained by one of the most distinguished personages in Japan, named Melchior Bugendono, a lord of Miri, a place of considerable importance in the kingdom of Aqui. He was a captain and a minister of very high merit in the service of King Amanguchi. He had openly professed the Christian religion for eighteen years, when the king, notwithstanding the high esteem in which he held him, wished him to venerate the gods of the country. The brave man, in answer to such a request, said that he was ready to give his life for the king, but that he could not renounce his faith.

The tyrant informed him that he would let him feel what it costs to despise his orders. Melchior well understood that he was threatened with death; but as he was desirous of laying down his life, he contented himself with asking the king that, as the latter was bent upon destroying him, he might have him dragged through the streets of the city preceded by a herald who would proclaim in a loud voice that his crime was that he was a Christian. Had the tyrant only listened to what his anger dictated, he would have ordered him to be put to death on the spot; but being in doubt about the disposition of the emperor, he waited for a more favorable moment. Four years after, the occasion having presented itself, he sent a troop of a thousand soldiers with a bonze and an officer ordering Melchior to deliver up to them as hostages his son and his nephew. This was done in order to prevent any resistance to the execution of the sentence. The following day, August 16, 1605, two officers came and presented him with a warrant of his condemnation. Melchior read it without the least emotion; he contented himself with saying that the only crime for which he was made to die was that he was a Christian. He could not receive permission to be dragged through the streets as he had requested. The executioners told him that as he wished to die he might die like a man of honor by cutting open his abdomen, as is the custom in Japan; the good nobleman, however, replied that he wished to die not as a despairing Japanese, but as a Christian, resigned to God's holy will. He then knelt down in his room before the images of Jesus and Mary, and whilehe was recommending himself to God, he was beheaded. The news of what had taken place was carried at once to the tyrant, who not satisfied with the death of the father, ordered that his son, his nephews, as well as his wife, should also perish, and that their bodies should be burnt. He also had his son-in-law put to death, as he

was a Christian, and more than a hundred domestics of the family. The Bishop of Japan having collected information about their martyrdom, transmitted it to Rome.

In connection with the death of this pious nobleman, we must mention that of a poor blind man, named Damian. He had been baptized in 1585; and as he was gifted with extraordinary talents, he went about explaining and propagating the faith. A priest who was instructing the Christians at Amanguchi having been expelled, Damian took his place, and never ceased to preach and baptize in case of necessity. Informed of this conduct, the king sent to that place two commissioners, before whom Damian presented himself as soon as they cited him to appear. They made him on behalf of the prince brilliant offers should he wish to give up the Christian religion, and threatened him with death should he refuse. Damian answered without hesitation: "You give me the choice between life and death: it is death which I choose, and I prefer it to all the goods that you promise me." He then began to demonstrate to them the truth of the Christian faith; but they took no heed of his discourse, and resolved to put him to death. Fearing, however, that there might be a tumult, they placed-him upon a horse during the night and conducted him to the place of execution. Having been informed that he was condemned to death because he was a Christian, he joyfully dismounted and began to pray. Some moments afterwards, having thanked Jesus Christ for the grace of allowing him to die for his sake, he presented his head to the executioner. The latter, while holding the sabre already raised, told him that he could still save himself by denying his faith, but the martyr answered: "I wish to die a Christian; do your work." He was then beheaded, being at that time forty-five years old.

Then followed the martyrdom of a valiant nobleman named Leo Xiquigemon; he was from Jonai, a city of the kingdom of Saxuina, and thirty-five years old. Since his baptism he Gould speak of nothing else but of God, and when his friends urged him to take part in their diversions, he answered that present life being short he had no time to lose, in order to gain that life which has no end. The lord whose vassal he was, wishing to make him apostatize under the penalty of death, he protested that he was ready to die for his faith. It was in vain that his relatives and friends tried to shake his constancy; he always answered that he could not be unfaithful to God. Finally, the tyrant condemned him to be beheaded, and sent eight soldiers to execute him at his own house. Leo quietly received them and assured them that they need not fear any resistance on his part. He then dressed himself as for a grand feast, and took leave of his wife, who was still a pagan, saying to her: "If you love me, and if you desire to be with me after death, become a Christian, otherwise we shall be separated forever as far apart as heaven is from hell." He had two sons, one seventeen years old, who was still an idolater, the other only seven, who had been baptized three months before. He said to the first: "My son, if you love your father, follow his example, and you will come to join him at the place where he expects you." Then to the second he said: "Farewell, my dear child; learn of me to sacrifice your life rather than abandon your faith." After that he desired to be executed in the public square in order that every one might know that he died a Christian. Having laid aside his sword and dagger, he took in his hand a rosary and a crucifix, recommended himself to God, and gave a sign to the executioner to discharge his duty. This generous Christian was then beheaded at Sirassa, September 17, 1608.

CHAPTER V.

NEW PERSECUTION IN FINGO—JOACHIM GIROZAIEMO, MICHAEL FACIEMON AND HIS SON THOMAS, JOHN TINGORO AND HIS SON PETER.

1605-1609.

In the kingdom of Fingo, the persecution, after having abated, took a fresh impulse. We have spoken of three charitable noblemen who were present at the death of Simon Taquenda.[1] Their names were Joachim Girozaiemon, Michael Faciemon, and John Tingoro, and they directed together a confraternity of mercy that did a great deal of good. Their zeal was the cause why they were thrown into a frightful prison, in which Joachim died a true martyr at the end of two years, a victim of his sufferings. His two companions bore up under this torture for four years, when the king ordered them as well as their children to be beheaded.

This sentence having been made known to them, Michael asked the chief executioner to permit him to be crucified like Jesus Christ, and John begged to be cut to pieces. The officer assented, but he understood that this was to be done only after their death. While going to the place of execution with a rope around his neck, Michael walked rapidly, but John advanced slowly, exhausted as he was by a grave malady, and the rope by which he was bound being fastened so tightly that he could scarcely breathe. While they were on the way, the officers sent some soldiers to bring the children of the holy martyrs; these were Thomas, the son of Michael, aged twelve, and Peter, the son of John, who was only six years old.

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Thomas, on hearing that his father was going to martyrdom, conceived so great a desire for death that he hastened to leave the city to join him; and while embracing his father he said : " My father, see your son Thomas who is going to die with you for the faith. Far from fearing death, I desire it.; we shall go to heaven together." Little Peter was expected; but as he delayed in coming, the officer wished to hasten the execution. Michael was the first that was beheaded. The exe.cutioner wished to take Thomas aside to spare him the horror of seeing the torture of his father; but the çfrild cried out: "I wish to die near my father." He was then conducted near the bleeding body; there he offered his head with a countenance all radiant with joy, and invoking the names of Jesus and Mary, he received the death-blow. John was the third one that was beheaded.

There still remained little Peter, as he was at the house of his uncle and had a longer journey to make. Some days before, while the conversation was about the sufferings of his father, he had said: " They will make me die with him, because I am a Christian, and I am so glad." When the officers called to take him away, he was asleep. They awoke him and told him that his father was waiting for him to die with him. The child immediately set out with his guards, the latter leading him by the hand, and he hastened as fast as he could. On seeing him, the spectators burst into tears. Arrived at the place of execution, he readily went on his knees, and seeing the executioner drawing his sword, extended his neck while clasping his hands in prayer This movement deeply affected the executioner; he put back the sword into the scabbard, and withdrew, saying that he had not the-heart to kill this innocent lamb. T wo others sent to do the bloody deed shed tears and were unable to execute the order. At fast there was no one found t·»

immolate this tender victim but an unskilful slave, who, striking Peter at first on the shoulders, threw him on the ground. He returned twice to the charge without succeeding in cutting off the head, and he was obliged to saw it off with violence. Truly a barbarity at which a ferocious beast would have revolted !

Michael Facicmon, besides his son Thomas, had a daughter whom the Christians saved and conducted to Arima. Here a gentleman wished to unite her in marriage to his son; and as it was represented that this young orphan was deprived of everything, and had no dowry, he answered: "It is enough that she is the daughter of a martyr."

CHAPTER VI.

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF FIRANDO----CASPAR nixiguenca; Ursula, his wife; and john, their son.

1609.

During this period three persons of rank were also put to death in the kingdom of Firando. A distinguished nobleman, named Caspar Nixiguenca, was living at Tamanda, of which he was the ruler. He married his daughter, by the name of Mary, to the son of Condoquisan, the governor of the island. But the latter being an idolater felt reluctant to have in his house a daughter-in-law professing the Christian religion. He ceased not to make efforts to pervert her, until one day, no longer able to suffer his importunities, Mary left his house and went to the house of her father. The idolater, annoyed at her flight, wrote to her to return to his house undei pain of being denounced to the king, who would not

tolerate the Christian religion in his states. The pious young woman answered him that her religion forbade her to return, and that as she was a Christian, far from being afraid of death, she desired it.

Condoquisan, to revenge himself, hastened to accuse Caspar to the king, who was a profligate pagan. Caspar was at once summoned by the bonzes, who were charged with proceeding against the Christians. Scarcely had he reached the place when the soldiers threw themselves upon him to tie him, and when he asked them why they did so, the bonzes said to him: "You are a Christian, and it is for this reason that you are condemned to death." "If it is for this reason," rejoined the nobleman, "bind me as much as you please, and do not fear that I will offer resistance."

On the following morning the governor came to visit him, exhorting him to deny the faith if he wished to save his life as well as the life of his wife and his sons, who had also been arrested. Caspar answered that he was ready to die for Jesus Christ, and that he asked for no other grace than that he might die on the cross. The governor replied that for this the consent of the prince was needed. Then he had him conducted to the place where he was to be beheaded, and wished as a mark of honor to execute him himself.

On the same day the officers of justice proceeded to his house, where Ursula, his wife, and John, his son, were guarded. They wished to make them believe that they were going to lead them into exile with Caspar; but they were already aware of his martyrdom, and departed full of joy, not desiring anything so much as to die for the faith. The journey finished, a soldier suddenly drew his sabre and struck Ursula with it with great violence; but the weapon slipped and did not kill her. The saintly woman had thus time to fall on her knees. Invoking Jesus and Mary, she received the second blow which de-

prived her of life. John, who was in advance, turned back on hearing the noise; and seeing his mother die, he also knelt as she had done, and had his head also cut off.

This triple martyrdom happened November 14, 1609; Caspar and Ursula were both fifty-four years old, and John was twenty-five. There was no sentence pronounced against Mary, nor against the young wife of her brother.

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH OF THE KING OF ARIMA AND PERSECUTION RAISED BY HIS SON----THOMAS ONDA AND HIS FAMILY—FRANCIS AND MATTHEW, YOUNG PRINCES—EIGHT MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE----THE TYRANT PUNISHED.

1611-1614.

We have to relate here the edifying death of the king of Arima, Protasius or John,[1] of whom we spoke in the beginning—a death that was followed by a horrible persecution in the kingdom that was nearly Christian. The emperor had deposed and exiled him, in consequence of an odious intrigue concocted against him by his own son, named Michael. In his exile King John led a very penitent life, to repair all the bad example that he had given, and he desired nothing so much as to expiate by his death his past iniquities. God soon brought about the accomplishment of his desires.

Prince Michael, not content with having thus humbled his father, and with seating himself on his throne, wished also to deprive him of life. He had him accused to the emperor of several supposed crimes. The latter, taking

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tonnsel only of the hatred that he.bore him, condemned him without trial to be beheaded, and sent one hundred and· fifty soldiers 'Io carry out the sentence. It is the custom in Japan that when it is desired that a prince should die, the persons of his court defend him till death. But John begged his servants not to oppose his execution, and through affection for him they obeyed most reluctantly. Moreover^ he made them swear not to open his body after death, as he foresaw they would do, according to another barbarous custom. He then wrote to his unnatural son a letter full of tenderness, and asked his pardon should he ever have offended him. He afterwards had the Passion, of Jesus,Christ read to him, praying with tears that the many sins of his past life might be.forgiven him. Having had a crucifix put before him. he went on his kneesand calmly awaited the death-blow. The·good Princess Justa, his wife, who was present, took the head of her husband between her hands and kissed it. Then she withdrew to her apartments, where she cut off her hair, indicating thereby that she renounced the world.

'Che new king of Arima, the infamous parricide Michael, after having taken possession of all the goods of his father, declared war against the Christian religion. Following the advice of the bonzes, he published an edict obliging all his subjects to swear to him an oath of fidelity with the books of Cami and of Fotoqui on their heads, and declaring guilty of high treason all those who would refuse to do so. But the Christians, while protesting their entire submission to the orders of the king, said boldly that they would never allow the imposition of that infamous book; and several of them went to ask for it, not to place it on their heads, but to trample on it. Informed of what had occurred, the tyrant condemned all of them to the torture. Listening, however, to better counsel, he was contented with the death nf some

pi them, and sent the rest into exile. Those who were condemned to death submitted joyfully to the penalty; but the exiles were in deep affliction because they had not enjoyed the game happiness. We shall relate a few beautiful examples furnished by this persecution.

Michael had at his court a valiant captain, by the name of Thomas Onda. Not being able to suffer to see him a Christian, he ordered him to abjure his faith. Thomas answered that he could not betray the God to whose service he had devoted himself. Thereupon the tyrant ordered the governor of Arima to put to death him and his whole family.

The friends of Thomas counselled him to fly during the night; but the servant of God answered that he would have come from the extremities of Japan for the purpose of dying for Jesus Christ. He passed the night in prayer. The following morning the governor had him called on a false pretext. Thomas, having a presentiment that his end was approaching, embraced his mother and his three children; then he proceeded to the governor, who wished him to dine with him. Before sitting down to table the governor had a sword brought in, and showing it to his guest, he said: "What do you think of it? Is it not a suitable instrument to cut off a man's head ?" Thomas took it, not doubting that it had been prepared for him, and then returned it. saying that it was an excellent sword. At this moment the governor plunged it into his body, and stretched him dead on the ground.

The same thing happened to Thomas's brother, whose name was Matthias. Having been summoned by the governor, he took leave of his family and prepared himself for death; and as soon as he entered the house of the governor, the latter dispatched him with his sword.

Soldiers afterwards went to the dwelling of Thomas, where they found his mother, named Martha; his wife.

Justa; and his three children—two boys and one girl. Having entered, they announced to Martha that she should prepare herself to die, with her two grandchildren. The venerable lady thanked God for the favor that he was granting her, to shed her blood for the faith. Her two grandsons, Justus and James, aged respectively eleven and nine, having been brought to her, she embraced them and said: "My dear children, your father and your uncle have died for Jesus Christ. I am also going to die, and you will come with me. Are you satisfied to join your father, who is awaiting you in heaven?" The two boys answered that they wished this with all their heart; all that they asked was when this would take place. "This very day," answered Martha; "go, then, and bid farewell to your mother, and prepare yourselves for death." After having spoken these words she put on a white dress and made her grandchildren do the same. She then embraced Justa, her daughter-in-law, who was greatly afflicted at not being able to die with her children. She tried to console her by holding out to her the hope of also dying for the faith. At this moment there appeared before Justa her two sons dressed in white, who came to ask her for her blessing. "Farewell, my mother," said James to her; "my brother and I are going to die in order to be martyrs." Their Christian mother tenderly embraced them, and said, while shedding a torrent of tears, "Go, my dear sons, go and die for Jesus Christ; when you are at the place of execution show yourselves Christians. Your father awaits you, and Jesus Christ calls you to his palace. Go and die generously for him who died for you. When you extend the neck to receive death, invoke without ceasing Jesus and Mary. How unfortunate am I not to be able to die for you!"

The soldiers made the grandmother with the two children enter a litter. When the latter reached the place

where a crowd had gathered they dismounted, and looked about for him who was to put them to death. Having recognized him by the unsheathed sword, they knelt at his feet, with their hands joined, and while repeating the names of Jesus and Mary they fearlessly received the death-blow. Martha, who rejoiced at the firmness displayed hy her grandchildren, advanced modestly and put herself into an attitude of prayer. Finally she presented her head, which, being cut off at one blow, rebounded twice on the pavement.

Let us return to King Michael, the parricide. King John, his father, had only him from his first marriage; but his second wife, Queen Justa, had borne him four children, among whom were Princes Francis and Matthew. These children had remained in the kingdom, while their mother, after the death of the king, her husband, had been sent to Meaco. Prince Francis was only eight years old, and Prince Matthew was only six. In so tender an age, both knew how to show an inviolable attachment to the faith. Princess Fima, the second wife, or rather the concubine of Michael, who had taken her by repudiating his lawful wife, seeing one day these two'children, said to Francis: "Will you deny the God of the Christians?" The young prince indignantly answered: "No; I will never deny him" She replied: "If you do not consent to do so, the emperor will pm you to death." "God grant it," replied the prince; "I do not fear it, and I even desire it." She then tried to pervert Matthew, the younger prince, but he was as immovable as his brother. This wicked woman, being supported by a perfidious counsellor, afterwards prevailed upon the king to cause the death of these two innocent youths, thus to secure for himself the possession of the throne.

They were at first kept in close confinement, and it was noised abroad that they were living with their

mother at Meaco, whither only the two young princesses, their sisters, had been sent. Thus imprisoned, our little martyrs, as if they had a presentiment that they were doomed to death, prepared themselves by exercises of continual piety, especially by prayer and fasting, just as well as persons who are of a mature age and who have consummate virtue. During the night that was to be the last of their stay upon earth, as Francis was engaged till a very late hour, his servant reminded him that it was time to go to bed. "Ah!" cried out the youth, "I am thinking of the torments that Jesus Christ suffered for us, and that makes me weep. What goodness was that, to wish to die for us! Poor idolaters, who know not this good Saviour!" Before retiring he recommended his soul to the Blessed Virgin, in case he was to die that very night. About midnight a soldier quietly entered the room, approached little Matthew, who was asleep, and plunged a dagger into his heart; then he cut the throat of his brother Francis, and the servant found them in the morning, weltering in their blood. When their worthy mother, the exiled widow, was informed of this murder, as she had been for a long time united with God, she raised her eyes to heaven and thanked the Lord for having called to himself these two tender lambs that she had brought into existence.

Michael having been informed of this, resolved to extinguish entirely the Christian religion in Arima, no longer by putting his subjects to death, as this would have brought ruin to his states, but by employing the bonzes in perverting the faithful. For this purpose he had one of the most renowned of the bonzes to come to his court, but no Christian would visit him, with the exception of some who were forced to do so; and when they went they carried a rosary around the neck. The bonze preached, but no one would listen to him. The king seeing that no one took any^notice of the bonze, had him copie to

his palace, and ordered that every one should receive from his hands a kind of rosary by which the idolaters pretended to honor their god Amida. But all the Christians refused to take it; even the women refused, in spite of the orders of Princess Fima; and one of them, named Maxentia, took it and threw it into the face of the bonze. Then the princess ordered the women of her suite to take away from the Christians the rosary that they wore around the neck, and all resisted. She commanded a nobleman to take it away from them by force; but he declared that he could not do so, because such a thing was not proper for a nobleman and for a Christian. The king desired that at least his pages should receive the rosaries from the bonzes, but none of them would obey.

Later on, being instigated to a new persecution, he undertook to gain over eight noblemen of the highest rank by urging them to dissemble their religion, at least for a short time. Five of them consented, but the other three resisted with firmness, and were condemned to be burnt alive with their wives and children. They were at once made prisoners and locked up in a house, where they found eight others, namely, Adrian Mondo and Jane, his wife, with their daughter Magdalen, aged twenty, who had made a vow of virginity, and their son James, aged eleven; Leo Luguiemon and Martha, his wife; Leo Caniemon and his son Paul, who was twenty-seven years old.

The news of this having spread, about twenty thousand Christians assembled near the city, not in order to fight for the deliverance of the prisoners, but in order to die with them. Then four of the five noblemen who had apostatized came and threw themselves on their knees before this large crowd of the faithful, asking pardon for the scandal that they had given, and imploring the assistance of a priest to prepare them for death. After

this they wrote to the king to be again united to those who had been condemned; but this favor was refused them. The tyrant, frightened on seeing so many Christians, who had come to be present at the execution, ordered the prisoners to be put to death secretly in the house in which they were guarded; but having received from the faithful the assurance that they only desired to be present at the death of their brethren, so as to provide them with a suitable funeral, he decided that there should be raised in the middle of a plain a wooden cabin, to be filled with straw and other combustible materials, to serve as a funeral-pile for the condemned.

On October 7, 1613, the moment of departure having arrived, they embraced one another, and after having fallen on their knees to thank God for having made them worthy of dying for the love of him, they set out for the place of execution. The Christians having reassembled for the purpose of accompanying them, were ranged by the officials of the Confraternity, one half of them before, the other half behind the martyrs. They walked six abreast, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Those of the city of Arima held each a lighted candle, and wore upon the head a garland, as a sign of triumph; the rest carried each a rosary.

During the procession little James, hearing some one calling him martyr, answered with great modesty: "Wail a little; you are too fast; I indeed see the crown, but I am not yet in possession of it." As the distance to be traversed was great, several Christians offered to carry him on their shoulders; but he refused, saying: "We are imitating our Captain who ascended Calvary on foot carrying a heavy cross, which I have not to carry. Now we must labor; eternity will give us a long rest." When he perceived the place where all were to be burnt, he said to those present who were shedding tears

"Why do you weep? Do you not envy my happiness? Walk merrily, as you see me doing."

Having at last arrived at the place where they were to finish their sacrifice, our courageous martyrs hastened to kiss the stakes to which they were about to be tied. One of them, Leo Caniemon, having been put in a more elevated position, cried out with a loud voice: "We see the fire that is to consume us; but we see it without fear, well knowing that our souls will thence pass to eternal happiness. My brethren, the Christian religion is the only one in which we can be saved. Persevere in the faith; let not our torments frighten you; the sufferings are light and short; but the reward is great and is eternal. Be you the witnesses that we die for the faith in Jesus Christ."

As soon as they had been bound to the stakes, the head of the Confraternities displayed a banner on which was represented our Lord bound to the pillar, and said: "My brethren, see your Saviour, for the love of whom you are going to die. From the heights of the heavens he holds your crowns ready; courageously die for him who died for you." The funeral pile was then set on fire, and all the Christians fell at once upon their knees, praying to the Lord and the Blessed Virgin to assist the sufferers. The whole plain resounded with their lamentations; one cried out: "Jesus, Mary!" another: "My God, mercy!" The martyrs did not cease silently to recommend themselves to God. The fire having consumed the cords that tied little James, he suddenly rushed through the flames and cinders into the arms of his mother, who said to him: "My son, look up to heaven and invoke Jesus and Mary." The innocent boy, after having three times repeated the names of Jesus and Mary, fell dead at the feet of his mother, and she in her turn fell dead over him. Young Magdalen, the sister of James, still remained. Already burnt in every part of

her body, she bent over, and seizing some burning cinders she placed them upon her head as if she wished to make of them a crown for herself. A little while after she gently sank down and gave up her soul to God. Oh, what a beautiful triumph of the faith did the Church see on that day !

When all the martyrs had breathed their last, the Christians passed over the palisade, gathered up the relics, and buried them in the church at Nangasaki. The Bishop of Japan after due investigation had a public act drawn up in reference to this event.

Towards the end of the following year, 1614, King Michael, seeing that he had not gained the favor of the emperor as he had wished, imagined that he would gain it by means of a new persecution. To this end he decreed that all the Christians who were drawing from him revenues or pensions should lose them unless they abandoned their religion. After the publication of this edict fifty of the most distinguished families of the kingdom had the courage to renounce their entire fortune. Besides, on hearing of this the young persons who were members of the congregation of St. Joseph, who were all under fifteen years of age, took among themselves the following oath : " Even though we should be burnt alive, we shall never give up the faith." And as for the unfortunate Michael, who had redoubled the persecution, hoping that the emperor would give him a more extensive kingdom, received from him, after having published the barbarous edict, the peremptory order to leave Arima and to retire to the wretched kingdom of Fiunga. This was, indeed, a just chastisement of his perversity, that made him prefer the favor of the emperor to the grace of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL PERSECUTION DECREED BY THE EMPEROR DAIFU-SAMA---FIRMNESS OF THE CHRISTIANS OF MEACO.

1614.

Till the year 1614 there had been only local persecutions; but at this time the tempest extended through the whole of Japan and enveloped all the Christians. The Emperor Daifusama wished at first to expel all the missionaries and demolish all the churches. He then ordered that all the names of all the Christians should be taken down in order that they might be subjected to capital punishment if they did not deny their faith. When the list of the Christians of Meaco was presented to him, he became greatly enraged against the governor for having permitted them to multiply to such an extent. He then entrusted the task of exterminating the faithful to one of his most redoubtable generals.

This general proceeded to Meaco with the choicest troops, and there published that all Christians that would not apostatize from the faith should be tied to stakes and be burnt alive. On the following day it was remarked that the greatest part of the Christians had placed stakes before their doors in order to give notice that they were ready to submit to be burnt rather than renounce their faith. Among them there was a poor man who sold his garment, as well as a poor woman who sold her waistband, in order to purchase a stake. In the face of such disposition the tyrant contrived other expedients: he had all those stakes burnt in the public square, and gave orders to his agents to do all in their power to induce the Christians whose names were

inscribed on the list to give their consent to have them erased. Some yielded to the seduction; others having had their names erased against their will kept silence; but there was a great number who everywhere published that their names had been effaced without their consent. One of the streets of the city was inhabited only by Christians; there, women were seized, tied tightly in sacks as far as the neck, and thus left night and day exposed to the severity of the winter. There were several children who desired to be treated in the same manner. Women consecrated to God were in derision led about in their sacks through the streets of the city; then they were set free to make believe that they had abjured their faith. They did not, however, cease to cry out that they were Christians. The tyrant afterwards went to Ozaca, where he exercised the same cruelties; but the faithful showed no less constancy. Such was also the courage of the faithful of Sacaia, who were subjected to the like treatment.

CHAPTER IX.

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOMS OF AQUI AND BUNGO—BENEDICT, A CONVERTED BONZE—TWO FAMILIES THAT WERE PUT TO THE TEST—MICHAEL; LIN, HIS BROTHER; AND MAXENTIA. HIS WIFE.

1614.

Taidono, King of Aqui and of Bungo, heretofore favorable to the Christians, wished to conform to the imperial edict. He gave orders to four of his officers that they should also submit to it, but they answered him to his face that they were Christians, and that rather than abandon their faith, they were ready to lose all their

property, and even life itself. A young page said to the king with the same boldness: "Sire, I am disposed to obey you in all things; but if you command anything that is forbidden by the true God, here is my head, I give it up to you." While speaking thus, he uncovered his neck and presented it. Every one trembled, fearing that the enraged prince would himself cut off his head; but he restrained himself.

The city of Bungo offered in this persecution many beautiful examples of heroism. A converted bonze named Benedict was arrested there, with his whole family and other Christians. After they had been stripped of their garments, they were ignominiously dragged the distance of a league to an enclosed place. Here they were bound fast in sacks, and thrown upon one another. Benedict, who was lying below all of them, fainted away. The guards then carried him to a neighboring house, where he was importuned to abandon his faith. But as nothing could shake his constancy, he was put back into the sack and thrown under the others as before. When he was at the point of death they took him again into the house, where he died while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary. The companions of his sufferings were banished.

Having through others solicited in vain a Christian nobleman to obey the orders of the emperor, the king resolved to visit him in person, hoping to conquer him by this extraordinary condescension. The nobleman, hearing that the king was on the road to meet him. went on towards him and said to him: "Prince, I am extremely obliged to you for the honor you have deigned to confer upon me by visiting me in person; but if all this is for the purpose of making me change my religion, I declare that I wish to die a Christian. If that is a crime you may at once cut off my head." Having said this, he fell on bis knees, uncovered his shoulders, and awaited the

blow. At that moment his son, who was nine years old, ran up to him, and also knelt by his side. Then came his wife and his mother, who did the same in order that all might die together. This spectacle greatly moved the king and he withdrew ; but sometime afterwards, for fear of the emperor, he sent this entire noble family into exile.

Another distinguished nobleman, by the name of Titus, had to undergo a severer trial. The king used every kind of solicitation to persuade him to deny his faith ; and as he courageous!}· resisted, he was ordered to send, on his return home, his younger son, a boy nine years of age. Titus felt this order most difficult to execute, as he feared that his son would lose either his life or his faith ; but forced to obey, he embraced the child, exhorted him to remain firm, and sent him to the palace. Two days afterwards the prince sent word to the father that he had put his son to death because he had refused to abjure his religion, and he should now send his daughter, who was fourteen years old. This was a second cruel blow aimed at the heart of both father and mother ; but they had to be resigned to it. Some time having elapsed, Titus received the news that his daughter was also dead, and also the order to send his eldest son, aged sixteen. The good father was heart-broken by this last blow, which was more painful than the rest; he called his son, and said to him : "My dear child, your young brother and sister have died for Jesus Christ; they are now in heaven calling for you ; go, show that you are a true Christian, and prepare a place for your mother and for me, for we shall not delay to follow you." The young man fell on his knees, asked his father's blessing, and set out courageously for the palace. These saintly parents felt keenly the loss of their children ; but they were consoled in thinking that these were crowned in heaven and that thev were thus

disposing themselves to join them there. In fact the king soon informed Titus that he should send his wife. This last separation was cruel, yet it was unavoidable. Finally, he was informed that his children and his wife being dead, he was in his turn to be beheaded if he did not obey. Titus answered that it was the most agreeable news that he could receive; he joyfully set out for the palace, and asked the prince for the same favor that had been granted to his family. Here the scene was all at once changed: the king in the presence of Titus opened a door, and out came his wife and his children alive. He then told them to go home and to practise the Christian religion, to which they were so much attached.

Those who were exercising authority under King Taidono did not use the same moderation. We have read above about the heroic death of the converted bonze Benedict: we shall also cite the glorious example of three other martyrs of the kingdom of Bungo. A gentleman of rank, named Clement, had two sons, Michael and Lin; Michael, being married to a fervent Christian, whose name was Maxentia, was the father of several children. Clement showed great firmness at the beginning of the persecution; but after the publication of the imperial edict, although his two sons had protested that they would never abandon their faith, he cowardly signed a declaration stating that he and his family renounced the Christian religion. Michael and Lin, learning what their father had done, hastened to publish that they had not subscribed this act; and Clement himself, moved by the just reproaches of his children, retracted what he had signed. The governor then had the father and the two sons arrested, as also Maxentia, the wife of Michael, with his two young children. Three of them were seized, namely, Lin, Maxentia, and Peter, aged fourteen, the eldest son of

Michael. They were stripped and securely tied in sacks; the others were reserved to a more cruel torment, which was to see those suffer whom they loved. Young Peter, enclosed in his sack, encouraged his mother to suffer with patience; and, addressing the idolaters present, he said to them: "Beware of putting my name on the list of those who have denied the faith; if you dare to do so, I will myself go and accuse you of forgery." Lin and Maxentia prayed continually. They passed three days in this state without being able to turn either to one side or the other. After this long torture they were remanded to prison; and seven days later, July 13, 1614, Michael and Lin were condemned to be burnt alive. On leaving the prison Michael said to his brother: "See, now, in preference to our parents we have received the happiness of dying for Jesus Christ!" While going to the place of execution they saw that Maxentia was also conducted thither, and they found there three stakes. Michael and Lin immediately ran to embrace theirs. While the latter were being tied to them, Maxentia also asked to be tied; but she was refused in order that she might endure the pain of seeing her husband die. When the funeral pile had been set on fire, she wished to leap into the flames; but she was prevented. After she had witnessed this sorrowful holocaust, the executioners tried to frighten her by putting the sword to her neck, but she cried out: "This is not the way to frighten Christians: if you wish to frighten me you must threaten to spare my life." Then she knelt down and presented her neck to the executioner, telling him to do his duty She was then beheaded.

CHAPTER X.

JOACHIM AND THOMAS OF FACATA—ADAM OF THE ISLAND OF XIQUI—PAUL OF THE KINGDOM OF JAMAXIRO.

1614-1616.

The church of Facata was enjoying peace under a good king; but after the edict of the emperor a day was fixed on which all the Christians of a quarter of the city were to present themselves to have their names enrolled among those who had denied the faith. As the inhabitants of this city were the richest in Japan, for fear of losing their property they all made but a feeble resistance, with the exception of two faithful Christians, named Joachim and Thomas. Joachim, who was a physician, was so charitable as to treat gratuitously all the sick, and he exercised this charity principally among the poor. As the urgent solicitations of his friends could not shake his resolution, he was finally condemned to be hanged from a tree head downwards. Thomas was condemned to the same punishment, and he was tied to the same tree below Joachim. They remained in this state for three days, and there was none who dared to give them anything to eat or to drink; they, however, consoled themselves by thinking of the Cross of Jesus Christ. After this torture they were beheaded. A bonze was so struck by their constancy that he did not hesitate to say publicly: "Who could doubt the salvation of these two Christians who have given their blood in defence of their law?"

In the island of Xiqui, when the edict of the emperor was published, the priests who governed this church being obliged to depart, they left the care of it to an

old man named Adam Aracava. As this good man fulfilled worthily the duties of his office, he was arrested and brought before the governor, who did all in his power to win him over. Adam, however, replied : " When I compare the death with which men threaten me with the eternal life that God promises me, I look upon as good all the evil that can be done to me. The prince unjustly persecutes the Christians topreserve his crown ; and I should not fear what is just in order to acquire an immortal crown, and to please God, who is the sovereign Master of all kings." The governor becoming greatly incensed at such language, ordered that the saintly old man should be stripped and conducted through the city, preceded by a public crier, who was to say in a loud voice : " Here is the rnan who has rebelled against the emperor !" He was then kept suspended by the arms and feet from two posts from morning until night, for nine days. Finally he was condemned to be beheaded, and the execution took place during the night, on a mountain. Several witnesses have testified that his head while falling pronounced twice in a strong voice these sacred names : " Jesus, Mary !"

After this glorious death, a Christian who had through fear denied his faith felt so lively a remorse that he presented himself to the judges and declared to them, in the presence of several witnesses, that he had yielded to violence when he abjured his religion, but that now he wished to live and die a Christian. The judges derided him and drove him away. He then entered a neighboring house and impressed upon his forehead with a red-hot iron the sign of the cross. Returning to the judges he said to them : "Now you cannot doubt that I am a Christian. The God who has given me the strength to suffer this burning will also grant me the same to endure all the torments that you will inflict upon me." The governor intended at first to

put him to death; but reflecting that thereby the number of martyrs would only be increased, he left him in peace.

In 1616 occurred the martyrdom of Paul Tarosuque, who was of the kingdom of Jamaxiro. After the publication of the last edicts he was strongly urged to abandon his faith. As he refused to do so, his friends drew up a formula of abjuration, and holding his hand, made him sign it in spite of himself. This was the cause of the greatest affliction to him. But while he was in search of the means to repair this involuntary evil, an officer came to tell him that the governor was not satisfied with the act that he had signed, because he had omitted to indicate the sect which he had embraced. Paul, full of joy, seized at once the writing and tore it up. He declared that he was a Christian, and that he desired to seal his profession of faith with his blood. Then foreseeing that his death was near, he wrote to five of his friends, asking them to recommend him to God, and to obtain for him the grace of dying for the faith. Some time afterwards he was informed that he should prepare himself for death. This news completed bis happiness; he asked the officer to allow him to die on the cross; hut the latter answered that he could not change the sentence which condemned him to have his head cut off; and this sentence was carried out.

CHAPTER XI.

PERSECUTION AT NANGASAKI AND AT OMURA—BROTHER LEONARD GUIMURA AND HIS COMPANIONS—LIN TOIEMON.

1618-1619.

In 1618, at Nangasaki, which was the last refuge of the Christians, an officer of justice entered the house of

one of the principal inhabitants of the city and asked for a pen in order to register the names of all the Christians living there. A little girl eight years old gave him a pen, saying: "Take this, and put my name down so that I may be the first to die for Jesus Christ." Then came the mother, who also gave her name; and as the officer was going away she ran after him, holding in her arms her youngest child, and said: "Put also on your list, I beg you, the name of this child, who was sleeping when you came, and whom I had forgotten."

Among the many faithful Christians who were cast into prison in that year was Brother Leonard Guimura, a Japanese, of the Society of Jesus. This fervent Christian baptized in the prison eighty-six idolaters who had been locked up with him. The holy life led by these prisoners was most remarkable; for every day they made a two hours' meditation, and spent one hour in vocal prayer; they fasted Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; and on each Friday they prayed for five hours in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The governor knowing that Brother Leonard had changed his prison into a house of prayer, and that he had converted the idolatrous prisoners, condemned him to death with four of his companions. When they were interrogated the judge asked Leonard why he had remained in Japan. The Brother answered, saying: "I remained in order that I might preach the law of Jesus Christ." "For that," rejoined the judge, "you shall be burned alive." "Then," exclaimed Leonard, "let the world know that I am condemned to death by fire, and that I have preached the law of Jesus Christ." The judge addressing another of the faithful, named Dominic George, a Portuguese,[1] arrested for having given shelter to a missionary priest, he said that he also would be burnt for what he had done. Dominic replied: "I pre-

[1] As for his wife and child, see note in chan. xvii.

fer this sentence to the possession of the whole Japanese Empire." The five who had been condemned were then led to execution. The streets were crowded with people, the sea covered with boats filled with spectators who had assembled to witness the death of the holy confessors. Each one inclined respectfully to the stake to which he was then bound. The fire having been kindled, Leonard was after a short time seen to place reverentially the cinders upon his head while he sang the psalm *Laudat(Dominum omnes gentes.* This spectacle so filled the faithful with the desire of martyrdom that many of them approached the fire in order to be thrown into it; there were even two among them who asked their neighbors whether it were not permitted to cast themselves into it. Several pagans were converted when they saw' the joy exhibited by the martyrs in the midst of the flames. Their sacrifice was consummated November 28, 1619.

One is moved with compassion while reading about the sufferings of the confessors of the faith endured in the prison of Omura, a city situated about six leagues from Nangasaki. These holy prisoners were exposed to the inclemency of the weather in a place closed on the one side by a wall, on the other by a row of hedges, with guards who were keeping watch inside. They suffered from hunger—so much so that they frequently fainted. The guards, moved with pity, allowed the Christians to assist them by secretly furnishing them with food. The magistrates, however, wished to oblige the guards to swear by the gods of Japan that they would not permit any more assistance to be given to the prisoners, but a noble captain, a Christian, named Lin Toiemon, refused to take the oath, saying that he could swear only in the name of the true God. He well knew that such a refusai would cost him his life. After having recommended himself to the prayers of the prisoners, he retired to his own house and took leave of his friends.

Tiie soldiers did not delay to make an attack upon him, and one of them struck him in the neck with the sword. Lin fell immediately on his knees and offered his head, which was at once cut off. His wife, seeing him dead, ran after the executioners, crying out that she also was a Christian; but they refused to listen to her, saying that they had not received any orders concerning her. The death of Lin made those enter into themselves who had taken the sacrilegious oath; for three among them, moved by repentance for their fault, tore up publicly the paper on which this oath was written. A young nobleman was a martyr of his charity: he was killed with blows of the sword, because he had sent by one of his servants some refreshments to the prisoners. The servant was beheaded; his name was Thomas, and his master's name was Peter.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE KINGDOM OF BUNGO, JAMES FAITO, BALTHASAR AND HIS SON JAMES.

1619.

At this period two men of distinction also suffered martyrdom in the kingdom of Bungo.

The name of the first was James Faito. He had during the preceding year been expelled from his house, stripped of all his property, and reduced so much that he lived with his family in a poor cabin; finally, he was condemned to death for not having wished to deny his faith. The news of this sentence having reached him at his dwelling, he passed at once to a neighboring apartment, where he found his wife with one of his daughters, and said to them: "I have come to bid you farewell.

but on condition that you do not begin to weep." After having recommended himself to Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin, he put on his finest clothes and entered a boat which was to transport him to the place of execution. Having landed he wished to take off his shoes in order to go barefooted as far as the hill designated; there he fell upon his knees, presented his head to the executioner, and while invoking the names of Jesus and Mary, received the death-blow, October 15, 1619, at !,le age of fifty-four.

On the same day his cousin, by the name of Balthasar, superintendent of the royal treasury, obtained the same crown. He had also been despoiled of his property and exiled from the kingdom on account of his faith, and it was also in the place of exile where it was announced to him that he had been condemned to death because he was a Christian. He rejoiced greatly, and thanked the governor for having delivered him thereby from the miseries of this life. He subsequently visited his mother, Lucy his wife, and his daughter Thecla, and communicated to them the good news that he had received. The officers of justice came to ask him in which place he wished to die. "Wherever you please," he answered. Thecla then said: "My father, it is not necessary for you to leave the house; it would be for us a consolation to be present at your death." Balthasar rejoined: "My daughter, the Son of God wished to die outside of Jerusalem, in a public place; we should imitate his example by dying in the same place in which malefactors die." Before departing he prayed before the image of our Lord. His wife and his daughter wished to have the consolation of washing his feet; thereupon he set out and joined the executioners.

Balthasar had a son four years old, named James, who, seeing his father going to his death, threw himself at his feet and cried out that he wished to die with him.

The father persuaded him to remain with his mother; but the boy did not wish to leave him; finally, to rid himself of further trouble, he allowed him to follow him.

When all had arrived at the place of execution, the servant of God, seeing those present moved with compassion, spoke to them: "You would have reason to pity me if I died in punishment of a crime; but since I die for my religion, you should envy my happiness; fori only quit the earth in order to reign eternally in heaven." Having said this, he embraced his son, fell on his knees, made to God an offering of his life, and presented his neck to the executioner who beheaded him. The martyr was in his forty-eighth year.

Little James, without being frightened by the death of his father, knelt as he had done, kissed the collar of his garment, and received also the death-blow, while he was saying, "Jesus, Mary!" It was indeed wonderful to see so young a child die with such intrepidity; but il was still more wonderful that there could be found an executioner capable of immolating this little innocent.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIFTY-TWO MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE AT MEACO.

1619.

In the same year of 1619 thirty-six Christians of every age and of both sexes were arrested at Meaco; and as the prisons were already filled, they were kept in the open air. iÿgi

There was among them a good old man by the name of James, a physician and a fervent Christian. The superintendent, who highly esteemed him, had his bands

taken off and had him placed elsewhere, giving him to understand that he might set himself free; but James declared that being a Christian he wished to die with the rest. A soldier then seized him by the arm and said to him angrily: "Go away from here, unfortunate man; go and take a good place in prison, where we shall soon meet you." His intention was that the physician should return home; but James, obeying the command literally, went to the prison, happy at being able to rejoin his companions.

The emperor having come to Meaco, many other Christians were seized and incarcerated. The prisons of Japan, and above all those of Meaco, were so small and infectious that one could hardly breathe in them. Eight Christians died of sickness, hunger, and misery. It having been reported to the emperor that many Christians were in prison on account of their faith, he ordered that all of them should be burnt alive.

On the day of this barbarous execution, October 7, 1619, all the victims, to the number of fifty-two, were lied together and transported on nine carts to the place of execution. The men were placed in front, the young persons behind; in the middle were placed the women with their children. A public crier preceded them, publishing the sentence of death in these words: "The emperor wishes that these who are condemned shall be burnt alive, because they are Christians." And each lime this announcement was made the holy confessors cried out: "Yes, we die for Jesus Christ; live Jesus!" All those who saw them were unable to restrain their lears, especially when they noticed so many women and innocent children who were doomed to die.

On the funeral pile had been erected crosses to serve as stakes; this surprised and consoled our generous martyrs. While leaving the carts each one asked for his cross in order to embrace it; but it was found necessary

to tie two men or two women to each cross. Among the men was a lord belonging to the court, named John Tafioie, to whom great promises were offered, but the hero remained unshaken. Among the number of women was found Thecla, the wife of Tafioie; she died in the fire with five of her children, three of whom expired in her arms. When the flames burst forth from the funeral pile, the executioners began to howl, and those who were spectators shed tears and uttered cries, while the martyrs sang and invoked the holy name of Jesus. At first the smoke was so dense that no one could see them; but after a short time these holy martyrs were seen dying with their eyes raised to heaven. What was more remarkable was, that of so many persons who could have escaped, not one attempted to do so, and that even the children remained steadfastly in the fire till death. It is related that over this place a brilliant star was afterwards seen by pagans as well as by Christians.

There was among these martyrs a young person by the name of Martha, whom the officers at first drew aside so that she might escape; but she wept so bitterly that, to please her, they had to lock her up in prison with the others. She was threatened with the most horrible torments; most seductive offers were made to her; but she never ceased to answer that she wished to die for the faith. The dampness of the prison made her blind; and in this sad state all that she feared was that she might not die with the others. When the prisoners set out for the place of execution, Martha clung so closely to her mother, who was of the number of the condemned, that she could not be torn from her arms, and had to be delivered with her to the flames.

There was also among them another heroine named Monica; she was from the kingdom of Mino. She ardently desired martyrdom, and exercised herself beforehand in the endurance of all the torments that the

idolaters could inflict upon her. One day she went so far as to pick up a red-hot iron. On seeing this her sister cried out: "Ah! Monica, what are you doing?" "lam preparing myself for martyrdom," she answered. " I have already struggled against hunger, and I have overcome it; now I am handling fire in order to conquer it when I shall be obliged to endure it. Whoever does not make a trial of himself in this way should flee from danger." This courageous woman having reached the funeral pile, before descending from the cart, said in a loud voice: '· Listen to me, ye who are present: I declare to you tha-t I am a Christian, and that I die a Christian." She then died a glorious death.

CHAPTER XIV.

IGNATIUS XIQUIEMON, MARTYRED AT FUCIMO—CONVERSION OF A BONZE WHO HAD LED A BAD LIFE—MATTHIAS, OF THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA.

1619-20.

The great holocaust, of which we have just spoken, was followed by a victory that was gained, nearly in the same place, by a Christian hero, Ignatius Xiquiemon. Being at that time at Meaco, he was invited to a great ball which was given in honor of the Fotoqui; but he refused to take part in it, and ridiculed this vain superstition. As he was immediately pursued as a Christian, he withdrew to Fucimo, where he was arrested. The judges having asked whether he knew other wicked men professing the same religion that he professed, Ignatius, quite inflamed with zeal, replied that it was wrong for them to treat as wicked those men who were thinking

only of their salvation. He was put into prison, and at first treated with kindness because of his gentle manners that gained all hearts. But the news having spread that fifty-two Christians had been immolated at Meaco, he was at once brought to trial and condemned to death by fire. The haste with which he was conducted to the place of execution gave his executioners no time to prepare the stake and to gather the necessary wood. While they were arranging the funeral pile, Ignatius waited rvith so great tranquillity that the pagans themselves were filled with admiration. When he had been tied to the stake and the funeral pile had been kindled, he recited in a loud voice the *Pater noster;* but he could not finish it, as the smoke and the flames prevented him from speaking. An idolater seeing him half burnt approached and said to him: "Courage, brother; recommend yourself to the Fotoqui; there is yet time." Ignatius turned away his head while continuing his prayer, and gently gave up his soul to God. The Christians took his body and buried it with honors.

About the same time there occurred a wonderful conversion and the holy death of a bonze who had led a wicked life. He was so wicked, that while giving lodgings to travellers, he did so, not to give them hospitality, but to rob and to kill them. His crimes having come to the knowledge of the authorities, he was condemned to be buried in the ground up to his neck, and it was forbidden to give him any other thing than two or three mouthfuls of rice every evening, in order to prolong his torture. The unfortunate man passed several days in this state; but when already the worms were beginning to devour his entrails, God permitted that there should shine forth in him the wonderful effects of his mercy. Some Christian soldiers, touched with compassion, exhorted him, since he was about to die, to save his soul and to receive baptism, without which he could not

be saved. As this bonze belonged to the number of those who did not believe in a future life, he ridiculed their exhortations. The soldiers, however, insisted, in speaking to him especially of the worm of conscience that would gnaw his heart eternally in hell, and would do so in a manner more horrible than the material worms that were actually gnawing his entrails. This great sinner becoming then enlightened with the grace of God. asked for baptism, and received it with great sorrow for his past life. He thenceforward accepted his punishment in a spirit of penance, and died in a holy manner, never ceasing to repeat the names of Jesus and Mary.

We have here another example of firmness given, in 1620, by a Christian of the kingdom of Arima. His name was Matthias, and he was devoting himself to the service of the Father Provincial of the Jesuits. One night as he was carrying a cassock to Nangasaki, he was arrested by the soldiers and taken before the governor. The latter asked him to whom belonged the garment that he was carrying. Matthias, in order not to expose himself to the danger of telling a lie, and at the same time in order not to betray the religious, kept silence. The soldiers heaped upon him every kind of bad treatment to oblige him to speak; but he courageously persisted in giving no answer. Then he was extended on two pieces of wood, and made to swallow so great a quantity of water that he was on the point of expiring. Matthias suffered all without saying anything and without uttering the least complaint. His invincible constancy being thus apparent, he was sent to the governor of Arima, who although he saw him in a half-dead condition, had him tormented still more cruelly by forcing him to swallow water and to vomit it violently. The patient asked for a moment's repose, which was granted in the hope that he was at last going to reveal all; but no precise answer was given. They threatened him with yet more cruel

torments, when he fell down in a swoon, and as his tongue hung out of his mouth, a soldier struck him on the head with so powerful a blow of his fist that his teeth bit off his tongue. He remained in this state during the whole night; and on the following morning he gave up his beautiful soul to God, in the forty-ninth year of his life.

CHAPTER XV.

SIMON ËOCUSAI AND HIS COMPANIONS, IN BUNGO—JOHN CIU AND JOHN ITO, AT NANGASAKI—LEO NONDA, IN FINGO.

1620-21.

In the kingdom of Bungo a nobleman named Simon Bocusai, who had distinguished himself in the army by his bravery, consecrated himself later on to the service of God and to the salvation of souls. He opened a school in which he taught the doctrines and the maxims of the Christian religion. The king ordered him to close his school; but as Simon did not obey, he condemned him to die on the cross, with Magdalen, his wife, and the members of the Christian family that were living in his house, namely, Thomas Guengoro, Mary, his wife, and James, their child. Simon, informed of his approaching end, wrote to a religious as follows: "The prince has pronounced against me the sentence of death; I must therefore die soon. I have often asked this grace of God; I hope that, if my sins offer no obstacle, I may go in a few hours to enjoy eternal happiness. I entreat you to obtain for me perseverance." The virtuous wife of Simon and their guests received with the same joy the news of their condemnation. On the following day.

being informed that they would have to proceed to the place of execution, they knelt down before a crucifix, and having reached their destination, each one prostrated himself at the foot of his cross. Simon asked the officer of justice to thank the prince on his part for the favor that he had conferred in causing him to die for Jesus Christ. The five martyrs were then crucified, September 14, 1620. Simon was then sixty years old; he died on the following day; so also did Magdalen; the others expired somewhat later.

In 1621, two noblemen of Nangasaki, John Ciu and John Ito, were decapitated for having given hospitality to two missionary Fathers. As they were persons of distinguished merit, the governor did all he could to save them; they, on the contrary, far from defending themselves, maintained that death was their due. Their wives put the greatest obstacle in their way, for they asserted that during the absence of their husbands they had had their names inscribed on the list of Christians, and that thus on themselves should the death penalty be inflicted, and not on their husbands; but the latter became so importunate by their arguments and entreaties that they gained the victory.

The same year, a nobleman of the kingdom of Fingo, by the name of Leo Nonda, after having received baptism at Nangasaki, retired to Isafai, his native city, and there lived a life of piety, applying himself above all to fortify the Christians who were wavering in their faith. He made many efforts to bring back to a virtuous life, among others, a young man who had gone astray; but seeing that he was only losing time, he abandoned him. This wretched man afterwards went through spite to accuse Leo of being a Christian. Whereupon the governor deputed three officers to visit Leo and to prevail upon him to deny his faith. They made use of every artifice to persuade him; but finding that he was unshaken

in the resolution of remaining faithful, they chained him, drove his wife and children from the house, and placed guards over it. Afterwards the governor sent some one to tell him, as if on behalf of his wife, that he should consent to dissemble his faith, at least with the mouth, and he should not by his obstinacy cause his own ruin and that of his family. Leo replied that the evils of the present life being transitory, he preferred them to the evils of the next life that are eternal, and that if he were forced to abandon his family it would not be abandoned by God. This stratagem having failed, the governor also employed several other persons of great authority to gain him over; but Leo informed him that in recognition of the goodness that he (the governor) showed in his regard, he would warn him that if he did not cease to adore the Camis and the Fotoqui, he would surely be condemned forever to hell. Thereupon the governor became greatly enraged, and pronounced against him the sentence of death. When Leo was informed of this, he rendered thanks to the Lord, and gave a beautiful exhortation to the idolaters present to induce them to follow Jesus Christ. During the following night he was secretly conveyed to a vessel that carried him to a neighboring island, where he was beheaded, July 25, 1621, in his forty-second year.

CHAPTER XVI.

14

PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF OXU—A FATHER RECLAIMED BY THE EXAMPLE OF HIS CHILD—JOACHIM AND ANN OF MIZUSAMA.

1621.

A governor of the kingdom of Oxu had published an edict declaring that all the Christians must, abandon

their religion under penalty of losing their lives, and he thereby forced one of his near relatives to deny the faith. The latter had a son, aged twelve years, who was also a Christian; he went to declare to the judges that he and his son had abandoned the faith. The son, however, as soon as he heard of this shameful proceeding, went to the judges and protested against the declaration of his father, saying that he was a Christian, and that he wished to die a Christian. The father on hearing of this, conducted him again to the judges, who told him that if he wished to remain a Christian, he would have to renounce the inheritance bequeathed to him by his father. "I renounce," said the boy with magnanimity, "not only the inheritance of my father, but all the grandeurs of this world, in order to gain eternal life." On hearing these words the father seized his dagger and rushed upon him to kill him. The boy seeing him come, instead of running away fell on his knees and presented his breast; but those who were present prevented him from committing the crime. few days afterwards, the fathei, in admiration of the fidelity of his son, entered into himself, acknowledged his fault, asked pardon of God. and declared in presence of the judges that he was a Christian, and that he willingly accepted death to wipe out with his blood the injury that he had done to God Moreover, finding himself one day in an assembly of the faithful, he mutilated his flesh with a discipline, crying out with tears in his eyes: "My brethren, lam unworthy of the name of Christian; I have sullied my soul with a great crime, and with black ingratitude towards my Creator and my Redeemer!" Thus was the constancy of the son the salvation of the father.

The same governor charged a commissioner to search for and exterminate all the Christians of his province. There lived in the town of Mizusama a holy man, named Joachim, with Ann, his wife, as virtuous as himself,

Both were advanced in years, one being sixty-six, the other sixty, and they had been baptized only two years before. The commissioner not having succeeded in making Joachim renounce his faith, he ordered him to be put in prison, where he was to be left to die of hunger. At the end of twenty-three days, as he was still living, thanks to the aid that had been given him by some of the faithful, the tyrant ordered that he together with his wife should be decapitated. The news of this having spread, the Christians went in crowds to visit Joachim in prison, where he exhorted all to meditate without teasing on the Passion of Jesus Christ, saying that the remembrance of this mystery would suffice to make them support courageously all that they would have to suffer in trying to save their souls. While he was thus speaking, the executioners entered and displayed in his presence the iron collars and handcuffs. He then bowed his head and gave thanks to God for having judged him worthy to carry these irons, more precious in his eyes than the sceptres and crowns of princes. The two saintly martyrs walked to the place of execution, their arms and neck laden with chains; Ann was accompanied by two women, and Joachim by a large number of Christians who had clothed themselves in silk in order to honor their martyrdom. Finally, at the place of execution when the executioner raised his arm to cut off the head of the martyr, the Christians uttered so loud a cry that the frightened man cutoff only one half of the neck; but he was at once replaced by another, who finished the work. This head, only the half of which was cut off, pronounced the names of Jesus and Mary. Ann was executed immediately after while repeating the same sacred names. This event occurred in 1621.

CHAPTER XVIi.

GREAT EXECUTION AT NANGASAKI—JUSTA, HER DAUGHTER MARY, AND HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGATHA-PAUL GAZAIEMON—CONSTANCY OF A CHILD

1622.

In 1622, September 2 or 10, there was at Nangasaki a great execution of Christians, which was called the Great Martyrdom, because twenty-one religious and thirty-one seculars were put to death, some of them being decapitated and the rest burnt alive. What was above all to be admired was the constancy of those who perished in the fire; for they had been but loosely tied to their stakes, so that overcome by their sufferings they could easily get loose, take flight, and declare themselves apostates; but the holy confessors steadfastly remained in the midst of the flames till death.[1] One of the condemned, who was not

[1] As these illustrious conquerors will probably not fail, as we have been assured, to receive the honors of triumph in the Church, as we have seen in the case of those mentioned, Chapter II., page 326, we deem it useful to give a list of their names.

There were eight Dominicans; namely, the Dominican Fathers Moralez, Alphonse de Mena, Ange Ferrier, Joseph and Hyacinthe Orfanelli; the brothers Alexis and Thomas; John, of the Third Order. The first six were burnt.

Four Franciscans: Fathers Peter d'Avila and Richard of St. Anne; Brothers Leo and Vincent. All four perished by fire. Father Richard is he of whom St. Alphonsus relates the example in the *Glories oj Afary,* P. I. ch. viii. § 1 (Vol. VII. p. 233).

Nine Jesuits: Fathers Charles Spinola, who was very celebrated, being regarded as the chief of this glorious phalanx, and Sebastian Quimura; the novices whose vows were received by Father Spinola before the execution, Peter Sampo, Gonzalve Fusai, Thomas Acafoxi, Michael Xumpo, Anthony Kiuni, Louis Cavara, and John Ciungocu.

counted among the fifty-two martyrs, came forth from the fire; but seeing the courage with which his wife suffered death, he again threw himself into the flames and returned to his stake. There were two others, who were still young, who fled and presented themselves to the judge, invoking Xaca and Amida. But oh, astonishing thing, that proves how much the wicked themselves abhor inconstancy in doing good! the idolaters felt such contempt for these two apostates that they seized them and threw them back into the fire. Thus did these unfortunate men pass from the temporal to the eternal fire.

These victims were followed by many others immolated chiefly at Nangasaki and at Omura. In this latter city three women distinguished themselves above all by their admirable firmness. A magistrate having gone to visit one of them named Justa, whose son had been despoiled of all his property and deprived even of life on account of his faith, declared to her that he would aid her to recover all the possessions of her son if she would

All were condemned to the fire; but the last one was beheaded, for want of a stake to which to tie him.

The four seculars delivered up to the flames were: Anthony---- of Corea, Paul-----, Anthony Sanga, and Lucius Fraitez.

Twenty-seven seculars beheaded: Isabella Fernandez, widow of Dominic George, (Chap. XI. page 364), and his son Ignatius, aged four years; Mary, widow of Andrew Tocuan, a martyr; Apollina, a widow; Agnes, widow of Come, a martyr; Marina, a widow; Mary, wife of Anthony of Corea, condemned to the fire: his son, John aged twelve; and his brother Peter, aged three; Mary, widow of John Xun, a martyr; Dominica, a widow; Magdalen, wife of .Anthony Sanga, condemned Lo the fire; Mary, wife of Paul-----, also condemned to the fire; Catharine-----; Thecla, wife of Paul Nangaxi, the one who, having come forth from the fire, re-entered it voluntarily, and his son Peter, aged seven; Dominic Nacavo, son of Matthias, a martyr; Peter Motoiurna, aged five, son of John, a martyr; Bartholomew Cavano; Dominic \amanda; Damian -----, and his son Michael, aged five; Thomas-----; Clement and his son Anthony, aged three; Rufus-----' Clare, wife of a martyr.—Ed.

only cease to be a Christian. Justa also had a daughter called Mary, aged fourteen years. The judge having perceived her, said to her that he would adopt her as his daughter if she would adore the gods. "Adore the gods!" cried out the young Christian: "I adore only one God, the Creator of heaven and earth: it was for Him that my brother died, and it is for Him that I also wish to die." The judge then proceeded to the widow of the martyr, a young woman of eighteen, named Agatha, wdio was near her confinement; he falsely stated that Justa, her mother-in-law, had denied her faith, and that she should imitate her, and in doing so she would be taking care of her child. Agatha replied that she would prefer to see this child perish in her womb, rather than intrust it to the care of an idolater, the murderer of its father. She added that she desired death, hoping soon to rejoin her husband in heaven. The judge having reported all this to the governor, the latter condemned the three women to die the following night. When they heard of this sentence they fell on their knees to thank Jesus Christ for the grace that he had conferred on them. At the appointed hour, they joyfully set out for the place of execution, accompanied by more than three hundred Christians. When they arrived there, Agatha prostrated herself, having Justa on her right, and Mary, her daughter-in-law, on her left. After praying for some time, all three presented their necks and were beheaded, October 9. 1622.

At another place, a generous martyr named Paul Gazaiemon obtained the crown in his old age, and obtained it by a new kind of suffering. He was eighty years of age, and had employed the greatest part of his life in works of charity towards his neighbor, applying himself specially to assist the faithful who were sick or persecuted. Summoned one day to appear before the judges, he hastened to present himself, being happy to

give to God a life of which a natural death would soon deprive him. The governor seeing his constancy in the faith, conducted him to a convent of bonzes, who exhausted all their knowledge to make him prevaricate; but he clearly demonstrated to them the falsity of their religion and the truth of ours. The governor then endeavored to conquer him by torments. He was led to the sea shore, and was threatened with death by drowning if he did not renounce his faith. He was then put into a boat, his feet were enveloped in a bag, and his head in another; but Paul tranquilly said to the soldiers that at his age he had nothing more to hope nor to fear on earth, and that his greatest regret was not to have loved God more during life after having received so many graces. These barbarians, irritated by such language, stretched the good old man at his full length, and jumping upon his abdomen, trampled it with their feet; after this they tied his hands and feet, fastened a large stone to his neck, and threw him into the sea. To their great surprise, however, he floated upon the water for nearly an hour, and did not expire until he had peacefully finished his prayer.

On October 2d of the same year nine Christians were martyred at Nangasaki. Among them was a boy, who was tortured during the space of eight days, to make him discover the place where the religious were hidden; but he did nothing else but repeat the names of Jesus and Mary. The executioners, transported with rage, tore open his back between the shoulders and poured into it melted lead—a cruelty that the heroic boy suffered while constantly saying, "Jesus and Mary! I desire to go to heaven and see my God." The judges finally despaired of conquering him, and had him with his whole family burnt alive.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MANY VICTIMS OF THE PERSECUTION AT JEDO—MARY JAGERA AND HER COMPANIONS—MASSACRE OF CHILDREN.

1623.

During the month of September of the year 1625 many of the faithful were immolated at Jedo. On the 4th of the same month fifty of them perished by fire On the 29th there were twenty-four who were burnt, decapitated, or crucified. Among them was a woman named Mary Jagera, who had given shelter to a religious missionary. The governor having tried in vain all that he could to pervert her, ended by condemning her to the stake with four other women of high rank. On the day of the execution Mary was tied to a horse in order to be carried to the place of torture; she proceeded thither with a smiling countenance, accompanied by those who were to die with her. But what drew teats from the eyes of all was the spectacle of eighteen little children who were led to execution at the same time. They were so innocent that they indulged in play the whole length of the journey. One cannot read without horror the cruelties that were inflicted on these tender lambs. Some of them had their heads cut off, others had their bodies cut open as far as the throat; there were some who were divided in two; several were taken by the feet and cut in pieces. During this frightful butchery the five women continued in prayer, then the funeral pile was lit, and the saintly heroines were consumed by a slow fire.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRANCIS SINTARO AND MATTHIAS SQUIRAIEMON AT FIROXIMA—JOHN CUFROI IN THE KINGDOM OF ZIO.

The princes who were the least hostile to the Christians, to please the emperor did not cease to go in search of them and to persecute them. At Firoxima, a young lord called Francis Sintaro having learned that during his absence the guardian of his house had declared to the officers of justice that it harbored no Christian, hastened to write to the governor that the guardian had imposed on them, because he was a Christian and was resolved to remain such till death. This letter gave great pain to thegover nor, who very much regretted having to lose so distinguished an officer. He therefore engaged all the relatives and friends of Sintaro to unite their efforts in inducing him to deny the faith. They did all that they could for this purpose, but they gained nothing. The principal personages of the court wrote to him to make him on behalf of the emperor the most brilliant offers; but when lie perceived what they were aiming at, he threw their letters into the fire. The courier having remarked to him that those lords would feel themselves insulted if they heard what he had done, he said: "My friend, you are a courier, and not a counsellor; your duty is to bring the letters, not to give advice. You have done your duty: all you have now to do is to depart."

A short time after there presented themselves four officers, who had been sent by the governor to ask whether he was willing to embrace the religion of the prince. He answered that he desired to follow till death the religion of Jesus Christ, the King of heaven and earth.

After this declaration the governor ordered three other officers to put him to death if he persisted in his resolution, and would not yield. The latter having arrived at his house communicated to him the grief that the governor felt at seeing himself obliged to treat him rigorously according to the law, and represented to him the ruin of his whole family which his obstinacy would cause. Francis, full of intrepidity, answered: "The governor may order what he pleases: I am ready to obey him in all that is not contrary to the law of God; but it is unreasonable for him to demand of me that I should disobey the Sovereign of kings, who forbids me to adore any other god except Him." The officers replied: " If you refuse to do what you are asked, you must make up your mind to die." " I am resolved to die," he replied; "and I assure you that you could not have brought me more welcome news." They then said to him: "Since you are tired of living, die at least like a man of honor. Slit open your body, as people of your rank are accustomed to do." To this the Christian nobleman rejoined: " I would do so if the law of God permitted me, but it forbids me to take away my life. You have the sword in your hands: you may kill me, if you wish. I shall look upon him as my father who inflicts death upon me, because he will furnish me with a better life than that which he takes from me."

Having said this, he asked their permission to go to bid farewell to his mother; and on reaching her apartments he spoke thus to her: "My mother, the hour for which I have so much longed, and which I have asked of God to grant me, has at last come; I am going to die. Forgive me all the displeasure that I have caused you, and give me your blessing." Then he knelt down to receive this last favor. His mother tenderly embraced him, and said: "My dear son, may the Lord bless you, and give you the strength to die a holy death.

It greatly afflicts me to lose you; but I console myself in thinking that you are dying for Jesus Christ. May he be always praised for the grace that he is granting you !" He also took leave of his young wife, and returned to the place where he was to be executed. Whilst entering he saluted the officers, prostrated himself, and, after having prayed, he presented his head, which one of the officers cut off immediately. Francis Sintaro died in this manner, February 16, 1624, in the flower of his age, being only twenty-four years old.

While he was yet free, and many were urging him to give up his faith, having learned that a man of his acquaintance, by the name of Matthias Squiraiemon, had just been imprisoned for being a Christian, he cried out: " Happy Mathias, how I envy your situation !" and having taken up a pen he wrote him a letter of congratulation. But he obtained the palm of martyrdom before Matthias; the latter followed him a short time after.

Matthias was in the service of an idolatrous master of the city of Firoxima. The latter did all he could to seduce him; not having succeeded, he had him tied to a stake by his hands, arms, and neck. This was a frightful torture that used to be inflicted in Japan; for the cords are drawn so tightly that they penetrate the flesh, and sometimes as far as the bone. Matthias passed a day and a night in this state; and the tyrant, far from being moved, became more and more incensed. He ordered that upon his neck should be placed a large piece of wood, which the martyr carried for four days. During this interval many persons were sent to persuade him to yield; but as he was steadfast, his master ended by denouncing him to the governor, who condemned him to die on the cross.

Matthias received this news with expressions of the liveliest joy, happy to think that he was going to die like his Saviour. When he saw the cross he prostrated him-

self, and cried out, in imitation of the apostle St. Andrew: "O cross sanctified by the death of my Lord Jesus Christ! I venerate thee from the bottom of my heart." He then recited the *Confiteor,* and after a short prayer, raising his eyes to heaven, he said: "Praised forever be Jesus Christ, who deigns to call to himself by the way of the cross a sinner such as I am." He pronounced these words with so much serenity, that the idolaters while listening said to one another: "Who will be saved if these people are not?" When he had been raised on the cross he was pierced with lances, and gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator, February 17, 1624, at the age of thirty-seven years.

On the 14th of the same month, another noble and fervent Christian, named John Cufroi, after being eighteen months in prison, was condemned to death in the kingdom of Zio. Esteeming himself happy to die for the faith, he begged the one who had come to notify him of his condemnation to thank the governor on his behalf. Arrived at the place of his sacrifice, he publicly declared that the only crime for which he died was because he was a Christian. He was subjected to a barbarous torture. After he had been stripped of his garments, he was stretched on the ground and cut in two.

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE ISLAND OF NANCAIA, ISABELLA, MOTHER OF DAMIAN, AND HIS FAMILY; MARY, WIDOW OF JOHN SUCAMOTA, AND HIS FOUR SONS.

1624.

A generous servant of God, named Damian, had sacrificed his life for the faith in 1622. All his property

having been confiscated, the house where his mother Isabella, his wife Beatrice, and his children dwelt was assigned to them as their prison. Guards were constantly watching over them, and did not cease to importune them to leave the Christian religion; they, however, always answered that they desired to die for Jesus Christ. Finally, after two years of captivity, the governor condemned all of them to be put to death, with the exception of Isabella; yet this venerable woman, aged seventy-four, having bitterly complained that she could not share the fate of her family, to satisfy her he ordered that she also should be executed. The grandmother, the mother, and the four children were then led from the house to the place of execution. A pagan wished to save the eldest of the two sons, named Paul, aged twelve years, and he kept him secreted; but the boy managed things so well that he was able to escape and follow the others. 'They were placed in a vessel, to be transported to the island of Nancaia, the place of execution. While on their journey they were joined by Mary, widow of Sucamota, who had been martyred with Damian; she was also led to death with her four sons. The two families embraced each other in a most cordial manner, and began to chant together the praises of God.

Beatrice was the first that was immolated. Paul followed her; he was already on his knees awaiting the fatal blow, when the executioner, seeing on his neck a kind of collar that was the ornament worn by the children of rank in Japan, ordered him to take it off. The boy arose at once and removed it; he then knelt down again, bent his neck while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary. John, his brother, nine years of age. seeing him stretched dead at his side, courageously fell on his knees, and was at once decapitated. There still remained two girls—Magdalen,aged thirteen, and Isabella, who was seven. The executioners seized little Isabella.

and having thrown her on the body of her mother, killed her with three blows of the sabre. Magdalen afterwards perished in the same way. Finally, Isabella, who had obtained permission to die last, in order, she said, to have the consolation to see her whole family pass happily from the earth to heaven, after she had contemplated, not without the greatest grief, the massacre of all those who were dear to her, was also beheaded, March 5, 1624. We may here see how far the noble Christian soul can go.

Mary and her children, who had been treated in the same manner, were also put to death in this place. The mother was the first that was beheaded, together with the youngest of her sons, aged ten years. The other three remained on board of the vessel. Andrew was twenty-five years of age, Mance twenty-three, and John twenty-one. The executioners thrust each one into a sack as far as the neck, and covered the head with another sack. The three brothers asked to be fastened together in order that they might be united in death as they had been in life. Their request was granted; they were tied together, with large stones attached, and thus thrown into the sea.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE KINGDOM OF FIRANDO, MICHAEL FIEMON AND HIS FAMILY.

1624.

In a harbor of Firando there lived an excellent Christian by the name of Michael Fiemon, whose religious zeal was known by everyone. This was the reason why he was soon condemned to death with his whole family.

He had brought up his children so well that the idolaters tormented in vain for two days one of them named John, aged thirteen, trying to pervert him. He always said as hisonly answer: "I wish to die a Christian." Ursula, the wife of Michael, had a little daughter as wise as she was pretty; some pagans begged the mother to intrust her to them, promising that they would take care of her. Ursula declared that for all the gold in the world she would never permit any one of her children to pass into the hands of idolaters.

The day of their martyrdom having arrived, Michael took by the hand his eldest daughter Clara, aged seven, whilst in the other hand he carried a lighted candle, the symbol of faith; Ursula took care of Magdalen, the youngest, and also carried a lighted candle. On arriving at the place of execution Ursula asked the executioners to execute her last: "I wish," she said, "before dying to see all my family in safety." This was done.

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Michael, in his thirty-seventh year, was the first that was decapitated; the executioner took off his head with one blow, which was also to take off at the same time the head of little Clara, whom her father held in his arms; but this was only accomplished after several other blows. Then John arose and asked his mother to arrange his hair, which was too long, so as to offer the executioner no obstacle. The good mother embraced him, and raising his hair fastened it upon his head. The boy then approached the executioner, and noticing that the latter was yet very young, he thus addressed him: "It seems to me that you are afraid, and that you have never yet cut off a head; take care, and do your duty." Having said this he fell on his knees, joined his hands, and while invoking Jesus and Mary he courageously received the death-blow. Finally, Ursula, after having seen her husband and her two children die, cried out with tears in her eyes: "Be Thou praised, O my God! for having rendered

me worthy to be present at this sacrifice; now grant me the grace to have a share in their crown. I have no one else left but this child. O my God ! I offer it to Thee with me; accept this last sacrifice." After having recited this prayer she pressed the little Magdalen to her bosom; and the same blow caused the head of the mother and that of the daughter to fall.

CHAPTER XXII,

FIVE RELIGIOUS BURNT ALIVE AT OMURA----LEO MISAQUI AND HIS THREE SONS, IN BUNGO.

1624.

On August 25, 1624, there were taken from the prisons of Omura, to be delivered up to the flames, five religious; namely, a Dominican, Father Peter Vasquez; three Franciscans, Fathers Louis Sotelo and Louis Sassandra, and Brother Louis, a Japanese received into the Third Order; a Jesuit, Father Michael Carvailho. They were but lightly fastened to the stakes, so that when finding themselves unbound they could easily escape and declare themselves apostates, or they might at least serve to amuse the people by remaining voluntarily in the fire. The first one burnt was Brother Louis, who seeing himself loosened from his cords, passed through the flames, cast himself at the feet of the priests, to kiss their hands, and then returned to his stake, where he expired a few moments afterwards. Father Carvailho was the second to die. The third was Father Sassandra, a Japanese, who, seeing his cords burnt, wished to join his com panions; but not being able to walk, because his feet had been already half consumed, he contented himself

fvith saluting them from a distance, and died immediately after. As for the other two, there being but a slow fire, they remained in this torment for the space oi three hours, at the end of which they expired.

On May 8 of the same year occurred in the kingdom of Bungo the courageous death of Leo Misaqui. During the first persecution he had wavered in his faith, or at least he had given cause of suspicion; he having entered into himself, he called his oldest son, and declared to him that in order to expiate his fault he had taken the resolution to die for Jesus Christ. The young man, feeling himself too weak to imitate him, retired to another country. Leo afterwards called his three other sons, Andrew, Thomas, and John, and asked them what was their intention. They all three answered that they were ready to die with him for the faith. The officers of the governor being somewhat afraid of Leo, arrested John, the youngest of his sons. Leo at once presented himself before the judge, declaring to him that if in the past he had dissembled his religion, he now had made up his mind to expiate his infidelity, even at the expense of his life. The judge then summoned Thomas and Andrew. The latter was at first irresolute; but soon finding out the mistake that he had made, he had himself bound as a prisoner with his father and his two brothers. Then all that could be possibly done was tried to shake the fidelity of the three young servants of God; yet they resisted with firmness, and were finally condemned to die with their father. On reaching the place of execution Leo addressed a few words to his children to encourage them. While he was yet speaking, the son of the governor arrived, and said that he wished to try the temper of his arms upon the bodies of the martyrs. This was the reason why they were executed in so unusual a manner. Their heads were not merely cut off, but each by a blow of the sabre had his head taken off together with the le

shoulder. Leo was in his sixty-first year, Andrew was twenty-five, Thomas twenty-three, and John twenty.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAIUS AND JAMES COICI, BURNT AT OMURA.

1625.

I refrain from speaking of those martyrs whose combats resemble one another too much, so that the narrative may not become irksome to the reader. I cannot, however, pass over in silence those whose history contains certain particular circumstances. Such is the martyrdom of James Coici and of Caius, both having been burnt for the faith at Omura in 1625.

James was arrested for having lodged a missionary. Caius, on learning that James, his friend, was in prison, went thither to speak to him; and as the guards opposed his entrance, he opened a passage for himself by main force. In punishment for this insolence he was held a prisoner, and the lieutenant of the governor had him punished so severely that his face was black and blue. The lieutenant then told him that he could not save him from the chastisement that he merited unless he would promise to teach no more the Christian doctrine, as he had been in the habit of doing. Caius pleaded in excuse that he had consecrated his life to the instruction of his neighbor. The lieutenant nevertheless, as he took a liking to him, wished to set him at liberty; but Caius said to him while leaving the prison: "Do not think that I shall stop coming here; I will come to serve the prisoners, cost what it may." At these words the lieutenant changed his mind, and ordered him to be put in irons.

The governor having arrived at Omura from Nangasaki, ordered Cains to be brought before him; he promised that the past would be forgotten if he would bind himself no more to instruct the Christians. Caius again protested that it was a work of charity, which he could not give up. Thereupon the governor remanded him to prison, threatening that he would have him burnt alive. In fact, a short time afterwards he, with his friend James, was condemned to death by fire. They gayly walked to the place of execution, singing the litany of the saints. When they arrived, Caius broke away from the hands of his guards, and ran to embrace the stake that was destined for him; James in his turn did the same. They were then tied, and fire was set to the funeral pile. Caius knelt down in the middle of the flames, and while thanking God in a loud voice for having found him worthy to die as he had desired, he expired. James was also kneeling in the middle of the fire; when his cords had been consumed he arose as if he wished to speak to those present, but as his strength failed him he again knelt down, and died while invoking Jesus and Mary.

I must relate here the conversion of Caius. He was a native of Corea. Although brought up in paganism, he conceived so ardent a desire for the salvation of his soul that he retired into the woods so as better to think of the means to attain it. Corea having fallen into the hands of the Japanese, our young solitary was made a slave and transported to Japan, where he began to examine what sect of bonzes he should embrace in order to secure his salvation. In the mean time he retired to their principal house at Meaco, but he could not find there the peace that he was searching for. One day during sleep it seemed to him that the house was on fire: a little while afterwards a young child of ravishing beauty appeared to him, and announced to him that he would soon meet what he desired; at the same time he fell

himself quite well, though he had been sick. Despairing of seeing among the bonzes the light for which he was longing, he resolved to leave them. Scarcely had he left the house when he met a Christian, to whom he made known his mental troubles. The Christian having explained to him some truths of our faith, he was filled with admiration, and went to the house of the missionaries to become more thoroughly instructed. After receiving baptism Caius consecrated himself unreservedly to the service of God and to the instruction of the idolaters, and martyrdom put him in possession of the sovereign happiness which he was seeking.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ORGANTIN TANXU, AND LUCY, HIS WIFE, BURNT AT FUNAI.

1625.

The governor of Funai, the capital of the kingdom of Bungo, having by an edict called upon all the Christians to abjure their religion, Organtin Tanxu, a personage of considerable distinction in the country, refused to obey. He had a noble wife named Lucy, who was also a fervent Christian, and both were of an advanced age. The governor, after vain efforts to make them change their resolution, ended by condemning them to be burnt alive.

On the day of their martyrdom, September 1, 1624 or 1625, they were conducted to the sea-shore, the place where they were to be executed. Organtin on seeing his stake alighted from his horse and prostrated himself to salute it; Lucy followed his example. One of the officers then said to Organtin: "Now, old man, how are you pleased with the banquet that is prepared for you?

What say you in regard to the stake at which you are to be burnt?" The martyr, kissing the stake, replied: "This is the ladder which is to conduct me to heaven; I will never leave it, no matter how terrible my sufferings may be." Both bade farewell to those of their friends who were present; after which the executioners tied them to their stakes, and set the wood on fire. The wind blew the flames towards Lucy, who almost immediately gave up her soul to God, in her seventy-seventh year. Organtin did not cease to hold himself erect in the middle of the flames, without exhibiting the least pain, till he expired, leaving the executioners wrapt in admiration at his firmness and patience.

CHAPTER XXV.

MONICA OIVA, KILLED BY HER RELATIVES AT CUBOTA—THIRTY-TWO MARTYRS BURNT ALIVE.

1625.

A young woman, twenty-seven years old, by the name of Monica Oiva, who had been repudiated by her husband on account of her faith, went to Cubota to her relatives; but there she found a brother more cruel than her husband. In order to pervert her, this unworthy brother wished to force her to unite herself in marriage to another pagan; she excused herself, saying that she had made a vow of chastity, and consequently could not marry again. Incensed by her opposition, he made her serve in the kitchen for a whole year like a slave. The wife of the governor, informed of what was going on, sent for her, and strove by all means in her power to make her alter her resolution; but she labored in vain.

To remove all hope in this respect Monica cut off her hair; this in Japan was a sign of the absolute renunciation of marriage. Her relatives seeing this gave information of it to the governor, who permitted them to treat her as they pleased. Then these barbarians extended before her some matting to receive her blood, and declared to her that she must change her religion or die. She knelt down and presented her head, which was immediately cut off by one of her relatives.

About the same time, in the year 1625, the governor of Cubota condemned to the fire thirty-two Christian nobles, of whom nine were women; for them this was a great subject of rejoicing. In consideration of their rank, it was the intention to lead them to execution without tying them; but in order to bear greater resemblance to their divine Master, they entreated the executioners so earnestly, that the latter consented to tie them all, except the women and a boy thirteen years old, named Thomas. The martyrs moved onward in procession with a joyous and recollected air. Thomas walk, d at the head, holding in his hand the book of litanies; his exterior was so amiable and he appeared so cheerful that one could not look at him without being moved. He began the litany, and the rest responded. They journeyed a distance of two leagues. Having arrived at the place of execution, each one was fastened to his stake, and the wood was at once set on fire. They all died holding their eyes fixed on heaven, and while often repeating, "Have mercy on us, O Lord! have mercy on us!" Witnesses have testified that during the night a brilliant light was seen over the bodies of these martyrs, and that the inhabitants of Mina ascended the roofs of their houses to contemplate this prodigy, which on the third night was observed by more than three hundred persons.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PETER CABIOIE AND SUSANNA, JOHN NAISEN AND MONICA YOUNG LOUIS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, EXECUTED AT NANGASAKI.

1625.

A Christian woman, called Susanna, of the city of Facata, was summoned before the judge with her husband, Peter Cabioie, like her a fervent Christian, because they had provided lodgings for the missionaries. She took into her arms her little girl, aged three, and requested that the latter's name should be inscribed on the list ot Christians. Five days afterwards, seeing herself led away with the other prisoners, she took her husband by the hand and said to him: "I believe that they are going to torture us. I am going away first, and I hope with the help of God to remain faithful; I expect of you alike firmness. Remember that this life is short, and that eternity is very long."

The judges tried at first to unsettle Susanna by threats; then they subjected her modesty to a severe test by stripping her of her garments. They moreover suspended her to a tree by her hair; and this was done in very cold weather. While she was courageously enduring these tortures, one of the judges, seeing the little girl, whom a servant was carrying in her arms, asked to whom she belonged. The servant, in order to save it, replied that it was her own child. "No," cried out Susanna; "it is my child; look at the list where I have had her name inscribed." The judge, full of anger, ordered that the little innocent should also be stripped and be tied to the feet of her mother. The cold made the

child cry most bitterly, and the mother offered to God this cruel torture, which lasted eight whole hours. After this an iron collar was put upon her, and being fastened to a column she was obliged to serve in the kitchen like a slave during six months. Finally, she was conducted to Nangasaki, to be put to death with the other martyrs of whom we are going to speak. During the journey the child was taken from her; and this was for her the greatest suffering.

After Susanna, another valiant woman, named Monica, the wife of John Naisen, gave an example of a heroism not less wonderful. The governor having ordered her to be disrobed, then exposed to the insults of some dissolute young men, her husband though a fervent Christian, frightened by the sight of such an affront, cried out to the governor: "Impious man! Save the honor of my wife, and I will do all that the judge wishes me to do." John had then the weakness to say that he denied the faith in order that the honor of his wife might be respected. Monica, however, remained firm. The governor commanded her to take in her hands some burning coals that she might feel the torture of fire with which he threatened her. As she was stretching out her hand the tyrant raised his sword to cut it off, and she did not withdraw it. He, however, set her at liberty with her husband on account of the words uttered by the latter.

Having gone to his home, John felt so great remorse that he resolved to go in search of the governor. The latter received him most kindly, praising him for what he had done; but John said: "I come to declare to you that I spoke against my conscience when I promised you that I would do what the judge should command. I have not denied the faith in my heart; I therefore protest that I am always a Christian, and I beg you to make 'his known to the judge." The governor, after having

conferred with the judge, sent him to prison, whither Monica, accompanied by her three young children, soon after came to rejoice with him at his repentance.

Then there was seen another example of Christian charity. A young and rich cavalier named Paul Uchibori, learning that John was incarcerated because he had lodged a missionary, went to present himself to the judge and told him that it was he, and not John, who had given shelter to the missionary. In fact, the missionary, on the evening preceding the day on which he was received by John, found himself in the house of Paul, where he sojourned for a long time; hence Paul concluded that the punishment should be inflicted on him, and not on John. The latter replied that the missionary had been secreted at his house, and therefore he should be subjected to punishment. The judge taxed these two generous men with folly when seeing them thus dispute about the right of dying. Finally, it was decided that John should die, and that Paul should be held a prisoner.[1]

The number of the condemned was reduced to eight; namely, John Naisen, Monica his wife, and little Louis, their son; Peter Cabioie and Susanna, his wife; Matthias Aragni, John Tanaca, and Catharine his wife. Tanaca was a poor laborer, advanced in life. They were informed that they had to proceed to Nangasaki to be executed there; and soon after the saintly cortège set out All were on horseback except little Louis, whom a soldier, carried in his arms. Arrived at the place of execution, the four men who wrere to be burnt were tied each to his stake; the women knelt in prayer near their husbands. Louis having been placed on the ground ran towards his mother; but Monica made him leave her in order not to be disturbed in her prayers, and the child returned to the

[1] We shall hear of his martyrdom in the following chapter.

soldier, who again took him in his arms. John, seeing that Louis was frightened, said to him: "My son, take courage, do not fear; we are going to enter Paradise." The execution was begun by beheading the three women and young Louis; then fire was set to the funeral pile. John Tanaca, seeing his fetters consumed, walked through the flames and went to kiss the hands of each of his companions; he then returned to his place, where he fell and expired. Finally, all having accomplished their sacrifice, they went to receive in heaven the palm that they had merited, July 12, 1625.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRIGHTFUL PERSECUTION IN THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA—JOACHIM MINESUIEDAI, CASPAR NAGAIOSAN, LOUIS XINSABURO, JOHN TEMPEI, BARTHOLOMEW SANUIEMON, SIMON KE1SAIEM0N, PAUL UCHIBORI, LEONARD MASSUDADEUZO, AND THEIR COMPANIONS.

1627.

In 1627, the persecution in the kingdom of Arima was redoubled. New tortures were invented to torment the Christians more cruelly; and the following was the occasion. The governor of this country was accused of malversation and of negligence in driving away the missionaries. The emperor wished to dismiss him and even to deprive him of life; and the latter only escaped by promising to exterminate all the Christians of the country. To this end, he had at first the names of all the males, not excepting the smaller children, taken down. He then ordered to be manufactured three iron instruments, suitable for forming together the word *Quirixitan,*

that is, *Christian,* which was thus divided: *Quiri-xi-tan;* being heated in the fire, the three instruments were used to impress these characters on the forehead and the two cheeks of every Christian. Many apostatized to escape this torture; but the rest remained steadfast.

Two young pages, John and Michael, showed a beautiful example of firmness. The governor, after having exhausted every means to make them abandon the Christian religion, threatened them that he would have all the fingers of their hands cut off. They at once boldly presented their hands, and the governor was on the point of executing his threat; but he restrained himself, and drove them away from his house. Michael went to a forest to hide himself; as for John, he was soon recalled by the tyrant, who, finding him always firm in his faith, had his face burnt with a torch so that his nostrils were entirely destroyed. A rope was then put around his neck and attached to a beam in a way that he could touch the ground only with the tips of his feet. Afterwards, his hands and feet having been bound behind his back, and being raised in the air, he was rapidly turned around. This was the cause of terrible anguish, to which poor John would have succumbed had not the governor released him. He did not die, but he constantly suffered excruciating pains till he had the happiness to give his life for Jesus Christ.

In the country of Ximabara eighty Christians, seeing that the persecution was increasing, encouraged one another to die for the faith. The governor having been informed of this, had them conducted into a citadel, giving orders to the commandant to force them into apostasy; but all his efforts having been useless, he had them come out one by one, and outside they were scourged in such a manner that many of them lost their lives, and the rest scarcely survived.

The governor gave orders that there should be sent to

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him at Ximabara the members of the two principal families of the city of Cuchinozu; namely, Joachim Minesuiedai, his wife Mary, and his mother-in-law Mary Piz, who was an octogenarian and blind; Caspar Nagaiosan and his wife Isabella. These five persons, after having generously confessed the faith, were tied to stakes in a public place; then on their forehead and two cheeks were burnt with hot-irons the letters which we have mentioned, and thus they were exposed for three days. After this torment they were remanded to Cuchinozu, there to undergo the same ignominy.

In this place a young man, twenty-six years old, named Xinsaburo, son of a glorious martyr, came to throw himself at their feet, which he kissed respectfully. The executioners, being greatly incensed at this, seized him at once, bound him, and inflicted upon him so terrible a bastinado that the blood flowed from his nose, mouth, and eyes. As he suffered all this without complaint, they cut off a finger of his right hand, and having stripped him, he was tied with the rest.

These intrepid martyrs were afterwards led through different provinces, to intimidate the Christians by so frightful a spectacle, and their number increased little by little to eighteen. From city to city sufferings were heaped upon them without ceasing. At the same time a number of other Christians were seized, and they were subjected to various torments. Some had one or more fingers cut off with a refinement of cruelty: others had all parts of the body burnt with torches; others had their limbs broken, and their heads crushed between two pieces of wood. A young man of twenty-four years of age, named John Cauxichi, was condemned to have his fingers cut off with red-hot scissors. He courageously extended the hand to endure this torture, but the lieutenant of the governor had him conducted to a house in order that an effort might be made to pervert him. His hand was

taken by force to make him sign the act of renunciation: but he seized the paper and tore it up. Whereupon the executioners threw themselves upon him in great rage, and overwhelmed him with blows. He was bound naked to a stake, and the flesh of his fingers was torn with red-hot pincers. Then his face and the sides of his body were burnt during a whole hour, and in order to completely disfigure him they rubbed his face with sea rushes. John suffered all these torments with admirable patience; and thus merited to be placed among the number of the eighteen who, having been brought back to Ximabara, were there kept in prison while awaiting their execution.

We must also mention another man of Sucori, named Thomas Soxin, who was sixty-eight years old, and had a son called John Tempei. The latter was at first solicited to renounce the Christian religion, and as he could not be gained over, he as well as his father was told to prepare himself to undergo the chastisement that the governor would inflict upon him. John informed his father of what was going on. The good old man seemed at that moment to be marvellously fortified by grace; and he said to his friends: " Help me to thank God, and to employ well the time that remains to me to live." The governor made renewed efforts to seduce John; but finding him immovable he delivered him into the hands of the judges to be put to the torture with his father and several others. A gridiron was placed upon burning coals, and the good old man Thomas was stretched thereupon; two executioners held his hands, and two others his feet; they turned his body in every way until it was entirely roasted. The martyr bore this torture with admirable courage and without uttering a word. At last they released him so as to make room for his son, who was present. The fire also penetrated him so thoroughly that his bones were laid bare. While he was

thus tormented, John did nothing but bless the Lord. Having been thus roasted on the gridiron, both were fastened to stakes, their ears were cut off, and the name *Quirixitan* was impressed on the forehead with hot irons so that they could not longer be recognized.

If any one should blame me for holding up a picture of these horrible torments, fearing that while reading this narrative one might happen to lose confidence in case one should find one's self under similar trials, I would beg leave to answer him that the strength to endure torments during the time of persecution is not to come from ourselves, but it must be given by God, who is all-powerful, and who has promised to hear him who prays with confidence: *He shall cry to me and I will hear him)*[1] He who is wanting in confidence in God, is also wanting in faith, when he says that he has not enough strength; for every one who in a case of necessity recommends himself to God, trusting in his promises, will surely be victorious, as he is strengthened by him who has said to his servants that his help will render them capable of all things: *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me)*[2] In this way the saints surmounted all their torments. But let us continue the narrative of the cruelties exercised against those of whom we have been speaking.

The other Christians in whose presence Thomas and John had been so horribly maltreated were asked whether they had the courage to endure similar tortures. Bartholomew Sanniemon, who had been arrested with his wife and four of his children, approached and fearlessly placed himself in front of the fire. Thereat the executioners became so enraged that they struck him with sticks in such a manner that he fell to the ground like one dead. His daughters were then put to the torture.

1 "Clamabit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum."—*Ps.* xc. 15.

2 "Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat."—*Phil.* iv. 13.

One of them, named Regina, as beautiful in mind as she was in body, having been strongly solicited to deny her faith, answered that she'wished to die for Jesus Christ; whereupon she was suspended by her feet to a stake, and her whole body was burnt by a torch.

At this moment the governor was informed that Thomas, who had been put in prison, was about to expire in consequence of his wounds. The barbarous tyrant wished to profit by the remainder of his life to torture him still more. By his orders the saintly old man was put into a boat. Then after four fingers of his hand had been cut off, he was plunged four times into the sea; into which he was finally thrown with a stone around his neck. He underwent these last cruelties before the eyes of his son, whose anguish was thereby increased.

The martyrs were afterwards transported to other cities to frighten the Christians by the spectacle of their sufferings; and as John's body was entirely burnt, he was put into a coffin made of reeds, that two men carried upon their shoulders. He was continually a prey to more violent pains; for his numerous wounds became as many centres of corruption that had now begun to mortify. This however did not prevent him from being always cheerful and from encouraging others to suffer for Jesus Christ. Finally, May 5, in his thirty-seventh vear he consummated his sacrifice on the cross which he was bound, head downward.

Among a crowd of other glorious athletes of the faith there was Peter, a boy, aged thirteen, whom the idolaters wished to force to yield to their request by suspending him naked to a tree and burning him with torches; yet he endured all this with invincible constancy. The executioners knowing no more what cruelty to invent, heated an earthen vessel and put it all burningas it was into his hand, saying that if he let it fall, it would be a

sign of apostasy. The young hero held the vessel, and did not flinch, although the fire penetrated to his very bones.

Simon Keisaiemon, an old man of sixty-two years, showing himself immovable in his faith, was summoned by the governor either to abjure or to be thrown naked upon a fire of live-coals. The good old man accepted this order as coming from God. Fearing that he would be giving a sign of infidelity if he did not obey, he immediately disrobed, and boldly stretched himself upon the burning coals, where he even turned himself, now upon one side, now upon the other; afterwards on his face, then on his back, according to the orders that were given to him. The tyrant, who was put to shame by so heroic conduct, left the place; but those who were present took the martyr from the fire and carried him into a house, where they gave him every care. Having thus been overcome by the father, the tyrant began to torment his sons in a horrible manner; but the holy old man had the consolation of seeing them come forth victorious like himself from the combat. He told them that he would die contented, since he had seen their fidelity towards God. Full of this joy, he died in consequence of the wounds that had been inflicted upon him, February 23, after ten days of suffering.

About this time there was taken from the prison Paul Uchibori, of whom we have already spoken,* with his three young sons. The governor to intimidate the father asked him which fingers of his eldest son Anthony he wished to have cut off. Paul answered that such a thing did not concern him. The tyrant then ordered that three fingers of each hand should be cut off. The boy at once extended his hand and fearlessly suffered this torture. His brother, Balthasar, when seeing him in this

* Chapter XXVI., page 400.

state, cried out: "O my brother! how beautiful appear to me your hands that have bees thus mutilated for the glory of Jesus Christ !" Then he also presented his hands to the executioner, who cut each finger several times. The third son, named Ignatius, was only five years old. On seeing the executioner approach armed with his knife, he likewise stretched forth his little hand, and this barbarian, having cut his first finger, held it up before his eyes; then he cut off one finger of the other hand, and the child did not utter the least complaint. After this torture they were transported with other Christians to the sea, into which they were plunged at different times, then drawn back into the vessel. Those who persevered were finally thrown into the sea with a stone around the neck; but several of them, overcome by the cold, apostatized. The valiant Paul thus saw throe of his children drowned in the sea, and he himself expected in his turn to join them; but he was brought back with the rest of the faithful to the sea-shore, where all had their faces burnt with red-hot irons and their fingers cut off. Paul encouraged his companions, and all suffered these tortures with firmness. After having been thus mutilated and disfigured, they were set at liberty. Paul fell down in a swoon in consequence of the great loss of blood; and having revived, he related that he had seen his children and that he had received from them consolation and encouragement. He then retired to a small house where he lived in extreme poverty while awaiting his execution.

But our martyrs did not long enjoy this liberty; for the governor, having resolved to make them die a cruel death, ordered them to go back to prison, and they obeyed. Here we must relate the frightful tortures to which they were subjected. Two leagues from Nangasaki there is a very high and steep mountain that is called Mount Ungen. Its summit is divided by three or four

deep abysses, full of sulphurous waters which subterranean fires keep constantly boiling. These waters are cast up together with flames through these large openings which the Japanese call the *mouths of hell;* and these masses of liquid are called *infernal waters;* they are seen to boil and are filled with vapor as if they were in a boiler that is placed over a fire. They are precipitated from the mountain with great noise and form lakes in different places. In these lakes they preserve such a heat that as soon as they touch the flesh they penetrate the very bones. It was upon this horrible mountain that the condemned, sixteen in number, were conducted, February 28, in order to be cast into the abyss.

Among these heroic Christians were several of whom we have spoken above;[1] the chief of them being Paul Uchibori. They set out on horseback, singing on the way the praises of God. Arrived at the summit of the mountain whence they directed their looks into the frightful abyss, they were not dismayed; on the contrary, Paul and Mary, the wife of Joachim Minesuiedai, alone of her sex among this troop of the elect, intoned the psalm *Laudele Dominum omnes gentes.* After having prayed, Paul spoke to the idolaters, saying to them that there is only one God, for the love of whom he and his companions were sacrificing their lives. He then exhorted his brethren, in order to encourage them to submit to martyrdom. They were conducted to the brink of the precipice, where they were stripped of their clothing. The executioners then passed a rope under their armpits, so as to be able to plunge them into the abyss and to withdraw them at will.

The first to gain the palm in the *infernal waters* was Louis Xinsaburo. On receiving the command to throw himself into the gulf, being fortified by the spirit of God,

[1] Pagv 403.

after having made the sign of the cross and invoked Jesus and Mary, he precipitated himself without fear, and thus consummated his martyrdom. Paul, however, informed his companions that it was not permitted to throw one's self into the gulf voluntarily. The executioners then threw them one after another into the burning waters so that they could be seen swimming about for an instant and then expiring. The last was Paul; in his case after the rope had been fastened to his feet, he was plunged into the waters, head foremost, and was drawn out half dead; the same thing was done a second time, during which he repeated: "Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament!" Finally he was made to perish in the abyss where he obtained his immortal crown, after having suffered so many torments for the faith.

The governor, after having used every effort to seduce the men, undertook to pervert the women. One among them, named Magdalen, was the wife of Leonard Massudadeuzo, of whom we shall speak further on. As her hand was forcibly held to make her inscribe her name on the list of renegades, she struck the register with a powerful blow and cried out that she would never obey the ministers of Satan. The judges incensed at such language, after having inflicted upon her a cruel bastinado, sent her to prison and afterwards conducted her to the sea. On the way thither she met her brother Caspar and wished to bid him farewell; but the guards bound him and took him with her. When they were out upon the sea, they asked that Caspar should persuade his sister to inscribe her name on the register. "God forbid!" cried out the young man, "that I should commit such a crime; I would rather encourage my sister to die for the faith." The guards were on the point of throwing him into the sea; but they abstained from doing so, since they had not received orders to that effect. They returned to his sister Magdalen, and enjoined upon

her either to renounce her religion or to throw herself into the sea. The pious woman replied: "It is in vain that you importune me to make me abandon my faith; all the torments in the world could never force me to do such a thing. As for throwing myself into the sea, do it yourselves; I am ready to die, but I must not cause my own death." Upon this declaration her hands and feet were tied and she was plunged into the water four times. Finally, because of her unshaken constancy she was precipitated into the sea with a stone fastened to her neck, and she thus gained the victory.

After that another Magdalen was seized. She had already suffered much for not renouncing her religion. She had been plunged twice into the sea, but when she saw that a stone was being fastened to her neck to drown her, she unfortunately failed and declared herself conquered. Although since that time she did not cease to lament and protest that she was a Christian, history does not inform us how she ended her life.

The governor having been told that the waters of the sea could not shake the constancy of the prisoners again condemned to the *infernal fires* ten of them, eight men and two women. On hearing this the servants of God passed the whole night in prayer; and on the following day, on arriving at the summit of Mt. Ungen, they prostrated themselves on the ground to honor the place of their martyrdom. One of them, Paul Mofioie, embracing his father, said: "What thanks shall we render to God for the honor that he confers upon us to die together for his glory?" Paul was the first that was lowered into the abyss; he was soon after withdrawn to see whether he would surrender; but, as he was about to expire and did not answer, a large quantity of the burning water was thrown upon him, and he was thus deprived of life. The executioner then set to torturing the courageous Joachim Suquidaia. They first made

him feel the painful effects of the *infernal waters;* then seeing his constancy, they opened his sides in different places with blows of a knife, and poured into his wounds the horrible liquid. Joachim, however, remained unshaken till his last breath. After him came John Chizaburo's turn. A pagan who wished to save him led him aside, and after having conversed with him a few moments, he went to tell the judge that John had submitted; but becoming aware of this trick, the generous martyr cried out that he wished to live and to die a Christian. The judge in his anger ordered that his sides should be cut open and the burning water should be poured into his wounds. During this torture, the servant of God did not cease to say: "My Jesus! do not remove Thy presence from me!" Finally, the executioners being fatigued, bound the other martyrs together and poured upon them such a quantity of the poisonous liquid that they soon expired. Their bodies were quite disfigured as if they had been flayed alive. This execution took place in the month of May.

There yet remained in prison a faithful soldier of Jesas Christ. It was Leonard Massudadenzo, the husband of the courageous Magdalen mentioned above. He had been accused of theft, a crime of which he was declared innocent. The governor offered him on condition that he would renounce Jesus Christ. Leonard answered that he did not wish to abandon his faith, even though he would have to endure the evils of the whole world. At these words the tyrant had him come before him, and seizing in his rage a hammer, he crushed all the fingers of one hand, one after another, asking him at each blow whether he persisted in his refusal. The holy martyr was then remanded to prison. On another day he was forced to swallow a large quantity of water; when he was gorged with it, he was stretched on the ground, where one of the executioners

stood upon his abdomen, and while trampling it with his feet, made him vomit forth the water, which came with the blood through his mouth, nose, and eyes. He was then placed upon a ladder, on which ha was violently drawn with ropes attached to his hands and feet. The servant of God afterwards related that during these tor tures he was consoled by the apparition of his wife, Magdalen, and that she encouraged him, saying: " Leon ard, be faithful to God." The judge not being able to shake his constancy, sent him back again to prison, where he spent several months, fasting three times a week, wearing hair-cloth, scourging himself with the discipline in order to obtain the grace of martyrdom of which he believed himself deprived on account of his sins. He there baptized an idolater, converted two apostates, and encouraged all the faithful to suffer for Jesus Christ. Finally, the Lord hearing his prayer and his desire to die a martyr of the faith, he was condemned to be beheaded, and he thus consummated his sacrifice, December 13, 1627.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PERSECUTION IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF JONEZAVA—LOU IL YEMONDONO AND HIS FAMILY, PAUL XIQUIBU, ANTHONY ANAZAVA, AND THEIR COMPANIONS.

1628.

The following year, 1628, a young prince, Lord of Jonezava, in order to commend himself to the emperor, enjoined upon a governor to force all the Christians of his States to follow the religion of the country. This governor, who was of a gentle and conciliatory dispo-

sition, in order to calm him, informed him that there were no Christians in his dominion. Another functionary, however, a rival of the former, made up a long list of Christians and sent it to the prince.

A little while after the prince asked the governor who among his subjects was the best captain whom he could safely promote to a higher rank. The governor proposed to him Yemondonoas the most worthy of all; but the prince, knowing that he was a Christian, said that he could not intrust his states to a man of this religion. To which the governor replied that Yemondono had been a Christian, but was so no longer. "If this is the case," answered the prince, " I will promote him."

Upon this promise the governor went in search of Yemondono with other friends, and endeavored to persuade him to accept the advantageous offers. Yemondono replied that there was no fortune in this world that could detach him from Jesus Christ. Having been informed of this, the prince ordered the governor to put to death Yemondono, his wife, his children, and all Christians. Whereupon the governor said to him: "Shall we sacrifice more than three thousand persons?" He knew that he would lose his life if he did not obey; yet thought it expedient to represent to his young master that all the precepts of the Christian law were full of justice, and that among them was one that specially ordained that one should expose one's life in the service of the prince. The tyrant would, however, not heed these representations, and confirmed the order that he had given, namely, that all the Christians should die.

The eldest son of Louis Yemondono, named Michael Taiemon, aged twenty-three, was at that time grievously ill; but hearing of the general condemnation of the Christians, leaped from his bed and cried out that joy had healed him. He had himself carried to the house of his venerable father, who rejoiced with him at the

good news and gave thanks to God. His second son, Vincent Ichibioie, did not delay to visit the paternal roof. Two officers afterwards came who were charged with the duty to announce to Yemondono that the prince had condemned him and his whole family to die on the following day, January 12. The good old man answered that he thanked the prince for making him die for so noble a cause; then addressing his two sons, he said to them: "Now, my dear children, I have nothing more to desire, since God is pleased that I should make him a sacrifice of my life,—a grace for which I have always been longing." Michael and Vincent, animated with the same sentiments, united their thanksgivings to those of their father. The two young women, Dominica and Thecla, the wives of the two brothers, having heard of what was going on, and burning with the same desire for martyrdom, hastened to join their husbands; they each had a little daughter that they carried in their arms.

Yemondono then desired to give his servants their discharge, and to make them presents; but they refused even the salary that was due to them, and declared that they all wished to die for Jesus Christ. The servants of Michael and those of his brother spoke in the same way. Among them was a young page, less than twelve years old, who was to be sent home to his parents, but he refused to go. He afterwards consented to return to his father's house, but only to take leave. His father endeavored to retain him by force; but the boy resolutely told him that he did not wish to lose so beautiful an occasion to prove his fidelity to his God; after this he fled from the house, and returned to join the martyrs.

The night was passed in exercises of piety and in making preparations under the direction of the saintlv old man. Two hours before day the officers of justice arrived; they found the servants of God awaiting the moment of their sacrifice. Upon all a rope was put

around the neck, and their hands were tied oehind the back, with the exception of the women and Yemondono. Remaining thus free to receive the executioners, he went to meet them with a smiling countenance; then he was bound like the rest. All knelt down before an image of the Mother of God that was fastened to a pike. A young page was charged with carrying this holy standard, and another had to accompany him with a blessed candle that was burning. The pious cortège finally left the house in the following order: after the two pages came the women; Thecla had her little daughter in her arms, and that of Dominica was carried by her chamber-maid; then followed the men, masters and servants; and the brave Yemondono closed the procession. They all showed so great a modesty that the idolaters were themselves deeply moved. Arrived at the place of execution, they fell on their knees, and again recommended themselves to the Blessed Virgin. All, to the number of fifteen, were beheaded, the women first, the men afterwards; their venerable chief, Yemondono, was the last that was executed; he received the mortal blow while pronouncing the names of Jesus and Marv.

There were left five of his servants who expected to die with the rest; but they were told to return home. These poor men, who were greatly distressed, said to the judge: "We are Christians as well as those who have just died; why do you not make us die with them?" Whilst thus speaking they remained on their knees. The two young pages refused above all to rise and to go away; they had to be forced out of the enclosure. They returned home, weeping for not having obtained the grace of being executed with the rest.

A second band of Christians, composed of seven persons, all of the same family, were afterwards put to death. Then came a nobleman, named Simon Xuzaie

mon, with his daughter, aged thirteen, whom some idolaters carried off in the hope of perverting them; but she escaped from their hands, and ran to the place of execution, where her father was already on his knees awaiting death; she placed herself by his side, and both were beheaded.

On the same day there was also executed a highly distinguished young lord named Paul Xiquibu, a great friend of Yemondono. The governor having notified him the previous evening to prepare himself, he sent his thanks to him. After midnight an emissary arrived, with orders to behead him when the sun should rise. Paul began to pray, and when morning came, set out for the place of execution. Magdalen, his wife, wished to follow him, but she was prevented from doing so: she was told that the prince, at the instance of her father, allowed her to live. This generous woman replied that it was an injustice to let a Christian wife live while they put to death her Christian husband. An officer seeing her burst into tears, to console her, said to her that he would try to procure for her the death that she desired; he added that the prince would not execute her publicly on account of the promise that he had given to her father; but he promised to come in the evening to behead her in her apartments. In the mean time, Paul, who had heard this whole conversation, seeing the ardent desire that his virtuous spouse showed to die for Jesus Christ, wept for joy; full of this sweet consolation, he walked cheerfully to the place of execution, where, after having prayed, he received the death-blow, and the palm that nothing can tarnish.

One league from Jonezava there lived several Christian noblemen belonging to the prince's court. The more distinguished among them were Anthony Anazava and Ignatius Soicmon. While they were absent, their wives, in order to save them, declared that their hus-

bands were not Christians. But our two heroes, when they heard of this, hastened to go in search of the governor, to let him know that their wives had deceived him. The latter having told them that they should obey the prince, they replied that if the prince wished to be obeyed he had but to order their death and they would be ready to submit to it.

Three days after, Anthony being in a house with soldiers, the latter pressed him to deny the faith, because they had received orders to arrest him in case of refusal. "That is right," Anthony answered: "do your duty at once." But as no one dared to put his hand upon him, he took the rope himself and passed it around his neck; then having put his hands behind his back, he begged them to tie him. Thus bound he went to the house of Ignatius, to whom he said on entering: "Well, friend, what say you about the state in which you see me?" "You never," answered Ignatius, "appeared to memore worthy of honor than on this day on which you carry the livery of Jesus Christ; I wish to share your glory." Having said this, he begged and obtained the favor of being bound like Anthony.

Four other noblemen were also arrested, among whom was Paul, the eldest son of Anthony. His two younger sons, Mancio and Michael, the former fourteen, the latter eleven years of age, having come to visit him, he said to them: "As you see, I am bound; are you not also ready to die for Jesus Christ?" "Yes," they answered, "we are ready." They presented themselves to the soldiers to be bound; but the latter said to them that if they wished to die with their father, they needed only to follow him.

A short time afterwards, by order of the prince, the men were conducted to another place, where they were beheaded. Their wives, who were also condemned, were taken with their children into the yard of the house that

had belonged to Ignatius, where they suffered the same punishment. Mancio and Michael having knelt down tc receive the death-blow, the pagans who were present were touched with compassion, and cried out that thest boys did not even know why they died; but both answered with firmness: " We die for Jesus Christ." Whereupon the executioners decapitated at first Mancio, the elder son. Michael, seeing his brother dead, put his hands to his hair to raise it up; at the same moment the executioner cut off with one blow of the sabre not only the head, but also the two hands—a spectacle that drew tears from the eyes of those present.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PERSECUTION PUSHED TO THE LAST DEGREE OF VIOLENCE AT NANGASAKI—ISABELLA AND SIMEON—FATHER ANTHONY ISCIDA.

1629-30.

About the year 1629 there came to Nangasaki a new governor, who was more cruel than all the rest. He made a large number of the faithful ascend the horrible Mount Ungen, and gave orders that they should be tormented as much as possible without causing their death, because death under these torments was the object of their desires. Among them was a young woman named Isabella, whose husband had denied the faith. She was placed on the brink of the abyss; there a large stone was fastened to her neck, and a small one was put on her head; she was told that if she let it fall, this would be a sign of apostasy. Isabella answered that even if her head were to fall, her soul would always remain firm and con-

stant in the faith. She nevertheless kept the same posture for several hours, and did not let the stone fall from her head. She passed the whole night in prayer. On the following day, from morning till night, burning water was poured on her head from time to time. She was treated in this manner for several days, and at intervals new cruelties were inflicted upon her. Every time they urged her to submit she answered: "I am a Christian, and I will be one till death." "But," said the executioners to her, "we will torment you in this way for ten, twenty years." "Ah," she cried, "ten, twenty years! that is too short a time; if I lived a hundred years I should esteem myself happy to suffer all this time the same tortures for the love of God." This torture lasted thirteen days, and the servant of God passed six of them without drinking, eating, or sleeping—her whole body being one wound. Finally, despairing of being able to conquer her, she had to be taken back to Nangasaki, where the governor had her hand taken by force to inscribe her name on the list of renegades; he then dismissed her. She, however, remained firm in her faith, and the pagans could not help admiring her courage.

The governor having ordered that all those who were imprisoned for the faith should be prosecuted, there were found among them two brothers, Alexis and Simeon. Alexis being asked to deny his faith, protested that hô would never consent; however, he had the misfortune to yield later on and to deny his faith. The judge then took in hand Simeon, the younger brother, who was in his nineteenth year; he asked him whether he had applied himself to study. "Others," said Simeon in reply, "study to succeed in the world; but I have studied only to learn how to die well." The judge having told him that many Christians advanced in age had abandoned the faith to save their lives, he replied: "As for myself, I qp sure that I cannot be saved except in my religion;

let others do what they please, I will never abandon it." After this, the governor condemned him with several others to be conducted to Mount Ungen.

Arrived at the summit of the mountain, Simeon was stripped and tied; then subjected to the same treatment as Isabella; but after several hours of the most excruciating sufferings he fell into a swoon. The same thing was renewed on the following day. When he recovered his senses he heard the executioners still speaking to him about denying his faith; he then said to them: "Know that whatever may be the torments that you make me endure, I will never adore your false gods." Irritated at these words, the judge ordered that he should be subjected for the third time to the punishment of the *infernal waters.* The executioners having again stripped him saw his body all covered with the most frightful wounds; nevertheless they stretched him on the ground, and continued to pour the horrible liquid on his flesh that was already consumed. The poor young man, quite exhausted, fainted again; he was placed in the cabin where he had been before, and left lying upon the ground. The wounds then began to putrefy, and worms were engendered. This created such a stench that in order to frighten Isabella, the valiant woman of whom we have spoken, she was threatened with being shut up in the same cabin with Simeon. The governor fearing that the patient might die, sent a doctor to cure him, or if he could not restore him to health, to have him sent back to his father. For the emperor desired that the Christians should no longer be put to death, but that they should be tormented till they renounced the faith;—a barbarous invention inspired by the devil. The doctor despairing of being able to heal Simeon, had him transported to his father's house; but the saintly youth was told that should he recover, he would be tortured anew. To this he replied, "That is just what I desire."

The young man arrived at his father's house more dead than alive. As the Christians came to visit him and congratulated him for having suffered so much for God, he made the request that in order to be freed from hearing such eulogies the door should be closed to everyone. There in solitude he was often heard to repeat: "Oh, my Jesus! Thy wounds, not mine, are great; all that I suffer is nothing in comparison with what Thou hast suffered for me." On the third day he asked that his face be washed "But, my son," said the father to him, " do you not know that your face is but one wound ? To wash it would only increase your sufferings." Simeon replied: "Wash it as well as you can; do you not see that I am going to paradise?" Then he asked for his crucifix, saying that he wished to give up his soul into the sacred wounds of the Saviour. It was given to him; and not being able to raise his arms to embrace it, he said: "Oh, my Saviour ! have pity on me." Then pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, he gave up his spirit to God, August 29, 1630. His father and his other relatives wept, but less for grief than for joy that they experienced in seeing this martyr in the bosom of their family.

Thé persecution in this country raged afterwards with siich fury that of six hundred thousand Christians who had been counted before, there soon remained no more than forty thousand, the rest having been either perverted or martyred. It was not long after those of whom we have just spoken that Father Anthony Iscida, a Japanese and missionary of the Society of Jesus, also won with much glory the immortal crown. Having been in prison at Omura for three years, he was worn out with sufferings. The governor not ceasing to press him to return to the worship of the gods of the country in which he had been born, this good priest answered: " In order to affect me it will be necessary to threaten

me with sparing my life. My most ardent desire is to suffer much and to die for Jesus Christ." The tyrant had him conducted to Mount Ungen, where, after his limbs had been dislocated, he was for thirty days subjected to torture by means of the sulphurous waters. He was finally burnt alive at Nangasaki, and thus consummated his sacrifice in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

CHAPTER XXX.

JAMES CUFIOIE; MARY, HIS MOTHER; LEO TASUQUE, HIS father-in-law; and his family.

1630.

We shall now relate the martyrdom of James Cufioie, one of the most zealous and most charitable Christians in the kingdom of Fingo. He lived at Nangasaki. Having offered his house as an asylum to Father Iscida, he was arrested and imprisoned with him. When he saw himself a prisoner, he regulated his time and his devotions in the following manner: He fasted the whole week, except on Sundays; he wore continually a hair-shirt, and spent daily twelve hours in prayer, in order to obtain from God the grace to die for the faith. The grace was granted him; for he was condemned to death by fire, and his mother, named Mary, was sentenced to die at the same time by being beheaded.

There was a woman named Agatha, who having learned that her husband had been condemned to death with his mother, while she herself was spared, went at once to visit them in prison. James seeing her weep, said to her: " Agatha, why these tears? Are you weeping on account of my death?" "No," she replied, " I weep be·

cause I was not condemned with you." James held out to her the hope that this consolation would not be refused to her.

Mary gave thanks to God, happy to see herself on the point of dying for Jesus Christ. The soldiers did not hesitate to take the son and the mother in order to lead them to the place of execution. Having arrived there James embraced the stake that awaited him; he wau then bound to it; and when the flames surrounded him on all sides, he began to sing the psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes.* Scarcely had he finished it when he fell and gave up his soul to God. Mary, his good mother, after having offered to the Lord the sacrifice of her son, who was immolated before her eyes, knelt down and presented her head to the executioner, who immediately cut it off. A few days after, James appeared to one of his friends, and being somewhat anxious about the salvation of his soul, said to him: "My friend, everything passes away; whence comes it that you neglect your salvation, and that you do not work for eternity ?"

Agatha in the mean time was inconsolable at finding herself still living. Five days after, it was announced to her that her three young sons had just been condemned to death. Far from being afflicted by this news, she rejoiced at the thought that to her children was assured the possession of eternal happiness. She only regretted that she was not able to follow them, and therefore said to the soldiers: "If my children are to die, why do you let me live—me, who am their mother?" The eldest, called John, was only nine years old; Michael, the second, was five; Ignatius, only two. This little innocent was at play when he was told that he was to die; and at once, how wonderful ! he entered the house without emotion, took his rosary, and knelt down for the purpose of praying.

The three young martyrs, after having bid farewell to

their mother, put themselves at the disposal of the soldiers. This affectionate mother accompanied them for some time; then having embraced them, she retired while encouraging them to die for God. When they reached the place of execution, John prostrated himself and lowered his collar in expectation of death; but the executioner, who trembled in performing so barbarous an action, missed his aim, and threw the boy on the ground. John arose again, and received a second blow, that severed his head from the body. The executioner passing then to Michael, missed him as he had missed his brother, and despatched him only after the second blow. There remained only the little Ignatius, who, with his hands joined, was awaiting tranquilly his turn; on seeing the boy, who, because of his smallness, was an object difficult to aim at, the executioner shook in every limb. With a trembling hand he aimed two blows at him, the first having missed. The spectators became quite indignant, and wished to rush upon the cruel wretch to tear him in pieces, but the judge hindered them from doing so.

Leo Tasuque, the maternal uncle of the three boys, was present at their execution, and he was put to death after them. He was a Christian of great virtue. As soon as James, his son-in-law, was arrested, he prepared himself for martyrdom. When his three grandchildren were taken to be led to execution, he accompanied them to the gate of the street, where he embraced them, repeating several times, with tears in his eyes: "Farewell, my dear children; when you get to paradise, do not forget me." On reaching his house he began to pray; but scarcely had he begun when he heard a confusion of voices saying: "Kill him, kill him!" Agatha hastened to the place whence the noise proceeded, and believing that she was the object of search, presented herself in order to be conducted to prison; but the soldiers oried

out: "Go away; it is not you whom we are seeking, but Tasuque, your father." The saintly old man, hearing his name mentioned, arose at once, and advanced towards them. A soldier threw himself upon him to tie him. "One moment, I beg you," said Leo to him; your cords are too weak; I am going to give you better ones." He then produced iron handcuffs, which he told him to fasten on him. He was at once conducted to the place where his three grandchildren were awaiting death. After they had been beheaded, he himself was also put to death in the same manner.

There now remained to poor Agatha of all the relatives only a little daughter, who to her great grief she saw taken from her without being able to die with her. We do not know what finally became of this desolate mother, because these facts occurred in 1630, and after this period we find no accurate accounts of what took place in Japan.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EXTREME CRUELTIES EXERCISED IN THE KINGDOM OF ARIMA—THOMAS QUICH1BIOIE AND HIS COMPANIONS—REMARKABLE PUNISHMENT OF THE TYRANT.

1630.

Bugondono, the furious tyrant who persecuted the faithful in the kingdom of Arima[1] with so much cruelty, became more and more ferocious. He formed the plan to have them conducted into the pagan temples so as to force them to worship the false gods. Three hundred of them showed an admirable constancy in the midst of

[1] Chap. XXVII., page 401.

the torments to which they were subjected. Of this number was a woman of high rank with her family. Her daughter, aged thirteen, was tortured in a horrible manner. Among the means that were employed to make her suffer was that of burying pointed reeds in her flesh; she was then roasted with burning coals; and when the executioners were tired of tormenting her, they would leave her only to return to their horrible work.

The tyrant afterwards conceived the idea of exercising a piece of diabolical cruelty against the fathers and the mothers of those who withstood the tortures. He gathered together a large number of the children of those who refused to renounce Jesus Christ, and after having skinned their hands, he placed upon them burning coals, saying that if they withdrew their hands this would be a sign of apostasy. There were some who withdrew their hands, though they protested they did not cease to be Christians; but many others bore without flinching this awful pain. They were thus tormented before the eyes of their parents, the majority of whom yielded through compassion for their children. There were about fifty of them who remained firm in the faith.

These last were conducted to Ximabara, where they were subjected to unheard-of trials. They were made to sit on two stakes placed in the form of a cross in a hole; then two boards hollowed out held them tightly by the neck; so that only the head could be seen above, whilst the body was in the hole. They remained in this position night and day. Every day, among the tortures that they had to suffer, a part of the neck was sawed with a wooden saw, precautions being taken to prolong their sufferings. A nobleman, named Thomas Quichibioie, bore this torment for seven days, at the end of which, May 31, 1630, he had his head entirely cut off. The example of his courage caused three of his companions to enter into themselves, as they had yielded

after resisting a long time. They deplored their unfaithfulness, and having again declared themselves Christians, were beheaded soon after.

But here the vengeance of God burst forth against the tyrant. He was at once seized with a burning fever, which made him furious, and caused him to utter loud cries. He sought everywhere for remedies, and several were offered him. He desired to mix and to take them all at once, saying that if each of the remedies could heal him, he would be still more sure of being cured by taking them all at once. Scarcely had he swallowed a part of the medicine when all his teeth fell out, and he felt as if there was a burning fire in his entrails. He thought that he would have recourse to the waters of Mount Ungen, of which salutary baths were made by tempering them with cold water; but as soon as he was in the bath he cried out that he was all on fire, and that the sight of the heads of all the Christians whom he had made to die caused him an insupportable torture. He thus expired in a transport of rage, in the month of December of the year 1630.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LAST EFFORTS OF THE MISSIONARIES—FATHER SEBASTIAN VIEYRA----END OF THE MISSION. 1632-34.

We have reached the end of this history; but before concluding it, it may be permitted to me to relate one more fact that was glorious for the faith. Father Sebastian Vieyra, a Portuguese Jesuit, expelled from Japan in 1614. came to Rome some years after, to render an

account to the Holy Father of the state of his mission. He then returned to Japan, into which he penetrated in disguise in 1632. The governor of Nangasaki having succeeded in capturing him, immediately gave information of this to the young emperor, who ordered that he should be taken to Jcdo for the purpose of obtaining from him news from Europe. Having arrived at this capital, he was visited by the lords of the court, and he spoke to them freely about the truths of our faith. The emperor wished to have in writing an abridgment of the Christian doctrines. When these memoirs had been carried to the court, and the reading of them had begun, it was remarked that the emperor seemed as if wavering and agitated by various thoughts, above all when the article about the immortality of the soul was read. He then said: "This bonze of Europe is aman of good faith; he exposes with sincerity the mysteries of his religion." He added: " If what he says of the immortality of the soul be true, as it seems to be, what will become of us, unhappy beings that we are?" The more the reading continued, the more the emperor appeared to be moved; but all the lights that he had on the truth of our faith were soon obscured by the discourses of Oiendono, his uncle, who persuaded him that all that the missionary had advanced was a tissue of lies, and that it was something unworthy of a prince to abandon the religion of his ancestors in order to embrace that of a stranger, an emissary of the King of Spain, who aspired to take possession of Japan as he had already done in the case of the Philippine islands. The young prince, imbued from his infancy with pagan maxims, yielded at once to the reasons given by his uncle, and condemned the holy missionary to the following torture: after he had been led through the streets of the city in a most ignominious way, he was suspended in a grave, his head downwards and his hands tied behind his back; two

boards hollowed out held him tightly in the middle of the body, depriving him entirely of light. He, however, predicted that he would die only by fire. In fact, at the end of three days, on finding him quite fresh, as if he had not suffered at all, the executioners kindled a large fire in the grave, and he thus consummated his martyrdom, January 6, 1634.

It was about this time that all the missionaries having been martyred or banished, with the exception of some who concealed themselves, the mission ceased to exist in Japan. Numerous spies were kept all along the coast, with orders to be on the watch for strangers and to oblige them as soon as discovered to trample on the crucifix. It was, therefore, no longer possible for any missionary to go there to keep alive the faith of the Christians who still remained. Those who were still devoting themselves to this heroic undertaking were soon arrested and put to death. The ports remained open only to the Protestant Hollanders, because the latter declaring that they did not belong to the Catholic Church, and rejecting the veneration of holy images, fell no repugnance in stepping upon the crucifix. The last missionary who died in Japan was Father Christopher Ferreyra; though in 1633 out of fear for the torments that were inflicted he had the misfortune to apostatize. After having passed nineteen years in this sad state, he acknowledged his sinfulness, again confessed Jesus Christ, and courageously submitted to the sentence of death, which was carried out in 1652.

To sum up, the mission of Japan lasted only eighty-four years since St. Francis Xavier opened it in 1549, and according to the best historians, this was eight years after the discovery of the islands or of the sixty-six kingdoms of which this empire is composed, and it ceased, as we have said, about the year 1633. Nevertheless, this last persecution 'lid not entirely extinguish

the faith in Japan, where one could still count many Christians; and even though at the present time there are no more to be found, one may hope that, as the faith has passed from Japan to China, so by an admirable substitution of grace, it will return from China to Japan. It is certain that so many martyrs, who have sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ, will not cease to intercede for the salvation of their countrymen, and we are justified in entertaining the hope that one day, in consideration of their merits, God will deliver from the servitude of the devil these unhappy countries.

Before concluding I will here relate a very edifying occurrence. Toward the end of the mission there was a religious of the Order of St. Augustine, who to remain unknown became a vender of chestnuts, and entered under this disguise one of the vessels. As he asked too much for his chestnuts some one gave him a blow on the cheek; but he received this affront without the slightest emotion, and continued quietly to offer his chestnuts for sale. The idolaters, observing that such meekness was not a virtue practised among them, suspected the vender of being a Christian, arrested him and put him to death, after the religious had openly professed his faith. Wonderful power of the grace of Jesus Christ, who gives to his servants the strength to practise virtues unknown among pagans!

Conclusion.

(Îonclttôion.

We here finish our history of the victories gained by the martyrs,—a work the reading of which will specially awaken in us two useful reflections:

The first reflection is that we should have great confidence in the intercession of the martyrs, who, while offering to God the sacrifice of their lives, have acquired great influence with him for obtaining for us the graces that we desire. The faithful who wish to invoke them can use the prayer that we have offered to their piety at the beginning.[1]

The second reflection, more important than the first, is, that if the martyrs have made themselves endeared to us by so many sufferings that they endured for Jesus Christ, and by the courage that they inspire in us to suffer also for him, with how much greater reason should we love this divine Master himself, who has deigned to descend from heaven and expire in pain on a cross in order to save us! If the martyrs merit our compassion and our love because they were innocent and holy, how much greater compassion and love should we have for Jesus Christ, who being innocence and holiness itself, died on the infamous gibbet to expiate our iniquities!

Let us, therefore, love this King of the Martyrs, as St. Augustine calls him; let us love this Good Pastor who loved us so as to give his life for us, his sheep, and his ungrateful sheep! And if we have shown ingratitude to him in the past, let us try, during the rest of our lives, to please and to love him with all our strength. For this purpose let us have our eyes constantly fixed on

[1] Page 40.

Jesus crucified; let us every day meditate for some time on the sorrowful martyrdom that he suffered for us, a martyrdom that comprised and surpassed immensely the pains endured by all the martyrs. Then we shall no longer have the melancholy courage to despise him. as we have done heretofore. The mere sight of Jesus crucified will make us love, at least out of gratitude, a God who died for the love of us!

O Son of God, our Redeemer! give us Thy love. O Mary, Mother of God! pray for us, and obtain for us this love. *Amen.*

φΗπηβ.'

On the Tomb of Alexander the Great.

Behold the end of all the pomp of earth,—
All human greatness, beauty, noble birth!—
Worms, rottenness, a little dust, a stone,
Close the brief scene of life for ev'ry one.
Who gives his heart to God alone is wise,
Dead to the world already ere he dies.
O thou that readest this! thou, too, one day
Must die;—which lot dost thou prefer, I pray,
To die a slave, and then in bliss to reign,—
Or die a king, and pass to endless pain?
Reflect, prepare; the present time flies fast;
Repentance comes too late when life is past.

^3

[1] We here give four hymns by St. Alphonsus that were recently discovered; and as the original text is not easily found we quote it in full. To these we add the lines that are sung during the missions.—Ed.

II.

Eternal Maxim·.

Why serve the world, thy enemy,
And from thy thankless heart dethrone
That God whose love created thee—
To love and serve Himself alone?

Slave of a tyrant thou dost live;
He promises, and breaks his word,
And for thy service nought can give
But bitter thorns as thy reward.

Remember, death will come one day;
His touch thy fragile life destroys;
Then, then, alas ! will fade away
Earth's cheating hopes and empty joys.

All worldly pleasures then will be
To thee but weariness and woe;
The scene of life must close for thee,

That body thou hast oft caress'd
Such noisome stench shall send around,
That all will fly the loathsome pest,
And hide the carrion in the ground.

Forth flies the spirit from this clay,
Alone before its God to stand;
The soul scarce yet has passed away,
The judge already is at hand.

Sinner! sinner! what wilt thou do,
Standing before the awful throne?
In vain for mercy wouldst thou sue,—
Stern Justice triumphs there alone.

Ah! miserable, thoughtless one!
Say, what excuse thou darest bring
Before that gaze of brightest sun,
The face of thy offended King.

What horror then the soul shall pierce,
When, spurned away by heavenly ire,
'Tis hurled into the torment fierce
Of never, never-ending fire!

Then shall be closed upon thy pain
The gates of hope and liberty;
Thou seekest death,—in vain, in vain;
It flies and mocks thy misery.

That moment when this life shall fail,
Or heaven or hell thy lot must be;
Eternal joys or endless wail,—
O moment! O eternity!

Think, then, ere yet this life is o'er,
On that whereon thy all depends;
That EVERMORE Or NEVERMORE,
Eternity which never ends!

ni.

Paraphrase on the Words of St. Aloysius.

Recede a me, Domine.

Depart from me, O Lord !

(These words St. Aloysius pronounced when he saw himself obliged by obedience to withdraw from the Blessed Sacrament.)

Poor heart, what art thou doing? say;
Seest not how thy good Master deigns
To bind thee with love's strongest chains,
And force thee here within to stay.

Where, O my soul, where wilt thou flee?
How, thus transfixed with love's keen dart»
Canst thou from thy true life depart,
Who on that altar stays for thee ?

But ah ! my God, what meaneth this?
Thou bindest first with such a chain,
Then forcest me to go with pain
Away from Thee, my only bliss.

Must I then go? Yes, I obey;
But here my heart shall stay with Thee,
True to Thy love still may it be:
I go; then come with me away.

Alas ! I cannot tear away
My soul from Thee, its very life;
I start, I wait, in saddest strife;
I cannot leave, I dare not stay.

Between the two, in doubts and fears,
I waver still from side to side;
While agitated, tost, and tried,
Love's target my poor heart appears.

What strife! what tempest in my will!
Obedience bids me haste away;
Thy love then binds and makes me stay,
It ravishes and holds me still.

Thus, when the winds on ocean blow,
A ship among the billows lost
By raging storms is fiercely tost,
And dashed with fury to and fro.

With sighs and tears I moan and cry;
Lov'd Jesus, in Thy mercy sweet,
From this rude torment, I entreat
Ah! set me free, and let me die.

In heaven, where love alone doth rei
There, dearest Jesus, I shall be,
Close bound, united, tied to Thee,
And never part from Thee again.

IV.

Affections to Jesus and to Mary.

In this sweet Sacrament, to Thee,
My God, be ceaseless praise!
And to the name of Jesus be
All love through endless days!

And blessed, too, be Mary's womb,
  Which gave to us that Son,
More pure, more fair than lily-bloom—
  Jesus, the Blessed One.

Come now, my loving Lord, to me,
  Oh, come into my heart;
Inflame it all with love of Thee,
  And never thence depart.

And let this wretched heart be Thine—
  Yes, Thine, dear God, alone !
And, Mary, may this soul of mine
  Henceforth be all thy own !

V.

Lines Sung during the Missions.

Love God, who loveth thee,
  For love itself is He ;
He bids the sinner weep;
He saith: Poor child, from sin depart;
Rest thee within thy Father's heart;
  Turn to thy Shepherd, wandering sheep.

A messenger from God am I,
  Pardon and grace I offer thee;
Perchance thine hour of death draws nigh:
  For thy soul's sake, ah ! list to me.

T?ie God of mercy calleth thee;
Turn not deaf ear and rebel heart;
If now His call rejected be
His grace He'll ne'er again impart.

Poor sinful one ! can'st thou remain
In God's disgrace, yet tremble not?
Depart from sin and pleasures vain
Ere hell becomes thy dreadful lot.

Long-suffering is thy Saviour dear,
But not forever will He wait;
If suddenly thy death draws near,
Say, sinner, what shall be thy fate?

Our Jesus is so sweet, so mild,
How canst thou turn from Him away?
Haste, then, with God be reconciled;
Poor sinner, make no vain delay.

How canst thou tranquil, joyous dwell;
Unmindful of eternity?
And on the very brink of hell
Slight ev'ry grace God offers thee?

Ere long thy life must pass away;
Know'st thou the hour when thou shalt die?
Perchance ere dawns another day
Thou wilt behold eternity !

My son, while yet thou hast the pow'r
Reflect how soon thy life must end—
How on its last sad, solemn hour
Eternal pains or joys depend.

If thou pursue thy careless way,
He who is now despis'd by thee
Will meet thee on that dying day
And thy Eternal Judge will be.

Then, sinner, wilt thou trembling **stand,**
Recalling past iniquity,
Dreading to fall into His hand
Who wrathful stands in majesty.

They who so blindly risk'd their all,
Nor thought on hell's eternal fire,
Now after death too surely fall
Into th' abyss so dark and dire.

And when shall hell's sharp pains **be** o'er?
The insult to God's majesty
Has been so deep that evermore
Those pains shall last, eternally.

Think on that dread eternity
To which thou art hast'ning ever;
Think of that long futurity
Of pains that will leave thee never.

CANZONCINE SPIRITUALI.[1]

I.

Sopra la Sepoltura d' Alessandro il Grand·.

Ecco dove finisce ogni grandezza,
Ogni pompa di terra, ogni bellezza:
Vermi, luto, vil pietra, o poca arena,
Chiudono al fin d'ognun' la breve scena.
Saggio chi, a Dio donando in vita il core,
Morto si trova al mondo, allorchè more!
O tu che leggi! ed ancor tu dovrai
Morire un dî; dimmi, che far vorrai:
Morir da abietto, ed esser poi beato;
O morire da grande, e gir dannato?
Pensa, e rimedia a tempo, ora che puoi;
Che tempo allor non vi sarà più poi!

II.

Sopra le Massime Eterne.

Perche al mondo, al tuo nemico,
Vuoi servire, o tu cor mio!
E non servi al tuo buon Dio,
Che a servirlo ti creô?

[1] See note, page 435. The first three of these hymns are taken from one of the volumes examined during the process of the canonization of St. Alphonsus, and the first is mentioned in his Life, l. i. ch. 3, either by Father Tannoia or by Cardinal Villecourt. As to the fourth, it is sung in Italy during the visits to the Blessed Sacrament as one of the hymns of our saint, and there is no doubt that he is the author.—Ed.

Vivi schiavo d' un tiranno
Che promette, e non attende,
E, a chi Γ serve, ingrato rende
Spine e fiele per mercè.

Pens' almen che un dî la morte
Darà fine alla tua vita,
Ed, oimè ! per te finita
Ogni cosa allor sarà.

Tutt' i beni allor del mondo
Ti sarann' d' affanno e pena,
In veder che la tua scena
Già si chiude ancor per te.

Questo corpo che tant' ami,
Manderà tanto fetore,
Ch' alla puzza ed all' orrore
Da te ognuno fuggirà,

Partirà da questa terra
L'alma sola, a render conto
Al gran Giudice, che pronto
Al suo uscir si troverà.

Che farai, tu peccatore,
Giunto innanzi al divin trono,
Quando allor, non piu perdono,
Ma giustizia vi sarà ?

Infelice, spensierato,
Va pensando che dirai,
Quando a vista già sarai,
Dell' offeso tuo Signor.

Qual affanno sarà poi
Da quel tron' esser cacciato
E in quel fuoco esser gittato
Che non mai più finirà !

Per te allor, d'ogni ristoro
Saran chiuse, oh Dio, le porte!
Cercherai per fin la morte,
E neppur potrai morir!

Della morte al gran momento,
Avrai dunque o cielo o inferno,
O riposo o pianto eterno..
Oh momento! oh eternita!

Mira dunque, finchè in vita
Di tua sorte incerto stai,
Quel grand Sempre e quel gran **Mai,**
Che in eterno durerà!

III.

Canzoncina di San Luigi Gonzaga.

Sopra quelle parole: " Recede a me, Domine, recede;" ch' egli proffer in doversi partire, per l' ubbidicnza avuta, dalla presenza del Santissimo Sacramento.

Mio povero core, oh Dio, che farai?
Non vedi, non senti, chè 'I tuo buon Signore,
Con dolci pur troppo catene d'amore,
Ti stringe, ti forza qui seco a restar?

E dove anderai, tu, anima mia?
Deh! come tu, stando d' amor si ferita,
Partire potrai lontan dalla Vita,
Che su quell' altare per te se ne sta?

Ma lascia ch' io parli: Quai tratto è mai questo?
Tu teco m' annodi con tante catene,
E poi mi costringi, o amato mio Bene!
Con duro precetto a partire da te!

Vuoi dunque ch' io parta? Si, voglio ubbidirti;
Ma sappi che resta qui teco il mio core:
Tu, pensa a serbarlo fedele al tuo amore;
E s' io da te parto, tu, vieni con me.

Ah ! no, chè non posso vedermi diviso
Da te, mio Tèsoro, mio Amore, mio Dio !
Pcrtanto la morte sospiro, desio,
Ch,e teco m' unisca p.er.sempre nel ciel.

IV.

Affetti verso Gesu Sacramentato.

Sia lodato, ogni momento,
Il mio Dio nel Sacramento !

Sia per sempre il nome amato
Di Gesù sacramentato!

Benedetto ancora sia
Il bel seno di Maria,

Che ci diede questo Figlio
Puro e bello più che giglio !

Vieni, amante mio Signore !
Vieni, e infiammami d' amore.

Fa che sia questo cor mio
Tutto tuo, mio caro Dio !

Fa che sia quest' alma mia
Tutta tua, dolce Maria!

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